

Positions - Problems - Polemics Edited by

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[9]

List of abbreviations

AAA	Anti-Communist Alliance of Argentina
Abs.	Paragraph
Adca	Allgemeine Deutsche Credit-Anstalt, Leipzig
ADGB	General German Federation of Trade Unions
ADV	All-German Association
AEG	General Electricity Company
Afa-Bund	Allgemeiner freier Angestellten-Bund
AG	Public limited company
AKON	Oder-Neisse Action
AOG	Act on the Regulation of National Labor (Labor Regulation Act)
Arch. GKBZHP	Archiwum Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, Warsaw (Archive of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitler's Crimes in Poland)
ARENA	Alianza Renovadora Nacional
Art.	Article
BA	Federal Archives Koblenz
BDM	Association of German Girls
BKP	Bulgarian Communist Party
Brabag	Lignite - Gasoline - AG
BSW	Fraternal cooperation between prisoners of war
BzG	Contributions to the history of the labor movement, Berlin
CDL	Committee for the Defense of Freedom
CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CEDADE	Circle of Friends of Europe
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CSU	Christian Social Union
DAAP	German Workers' and Employees' Party
DAF	German Labor Front
DAP	German Labor Party
Dinta	German Institute for Technical Work Training
DNVP	German National People's Party
DZfPh	German Journal of Philosophy, Berlin
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
ELP	Portuguese liberation army
EEC	European Economic Community
Gestapo	Secret State Police

Hapag	Hamburg-America Line
HJ	Hitler Youth
HSSPF	Higher SS and Police Leader [10]
HZ	Historical journal, Munich
IG	Community of interest
IGB	International Trade Union Confederation
IISG	International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam
IMG	Trial of the main war criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, November 14, 1945 - October 1, 1946
IML/ZPA	Institute for Marxism-Leninism at the Central Committee of the SED/Central Party Archive
IPW	Institute for International Politics and Economics, Berlin
ISK	International Socialist League of Struggle
JfnW	Yearbook for the National Socialist Economy
JöR	Yearbook of contemporary public law
JfW	Yearbook for Economic History, Berlin
JN	Young National Democrats
KG	Limited partnership
AI	Communist International
Comintern	Communist International
KP	Communist Party
KPD	Communist Party of Germany
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
KZ	Concentration camp
MAN	Augsburg-Nuremberg AG machine factory
Ltd.	with limited liability
MIRN	Independent movement for national reconstruction
MSI	Movimento Sociale Italiano
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKFD	National Committee Free Germany
NOE	European New Order
KPD	National Democratic Party
NS	National Socialist
NSBO	National Socialist company cell organization
NSDAP	National Socialist German Workers' Party
NSC	National Socialist People's Welfare
OKW	High Command of the Wehrmacht
PFS	Problems of peace and socialism
PKP	Portuguese Communist Party
Prot.	Protocol
RAD	Reich Labor Service
RGBI	Imperial Law Gazette
RM	Reichsmark

RGO	Revolutionary trade union opposition
RSHA	Reich Security Main Office
RT	Reichstag
SA	Assault section
SAI	Socialist Workers' International
SAP	Socialist Workers' Party of Germany
SD	Security service
SED	Socialist Unity Party of Germany
SFIO	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (French Socialist Party)
Sipo	Security police
SOPADE	Social Democratic Party of Germany [11]
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany
SS	Protection squadron
TEP	Preserving tradition, family and property
UN	United Nations Organization
VfZ	Quarterly journals for contemporary history, Stuttgart
WUNS	World Union of National Socialists
WV	Weimar Constitution
ZfG	Journal for Historical Science, Berlin
ZK	Central Committee
ZStA	Central State Archives of the GDR
[13]	

Introduction

Born six decades ago as an outgrowth of the imperialist urge "for violence and reaction"¹ as an aggressive response of the imperialist bourgeoisie to the October Revolution and the process of democratic renewal and socialist transformation of the world that began with it, fascism has become one of the main weapons in imperialism's arsenal, a political force that it holds in reserve or uses as a political mainstay, depending on the circumstances. Fascism has thus represented "an important factor in the political development of the capitalist world"² for 60 years.

Created to secure and expand imperialist rule and exploitation, it has been the cruelest and most dangerous enemy of all revolutionary, democratic and peace-loving forces from the very beginning. Wherever fascism came to power - first in Hungary, Italy and Bulgaria - it sought to destroy the revolutionary vanguard of the working class through bloody terror and make all democratic movements impossible. Brought to power in Germany in 1933, it grew into a deadly danger for the whole of humanity. In the Second World War, which, unleashed by fascist German imperialism, became the most comprehensive military confrontation between imperialism and socialism, the fate of the whole of human civilization was decided.

In this war, the coalition of fascist states was smashed. The victory of the Soviet Union and the other forces of the anti-Hitler coalition freed the peoples from the nightmare of world domination by German fascism, under which they had lived for many years. The defeat of the fascist bloc was at the same time a severe defeat for world imperialism and a triumph for world socialism. It fundamentally changed and continues to change the political map and the general balance of power in the world.

Thanks to this fact, positive changes in international relations towards political détente and the consolidation of peace could be achieved - especially in Europe. On an international scale, a political climate was created that was and is detrimental to the flourishing of fascist movements and fascist dictatorships, but favorable to the anti-fascist struggle, as demonstrated by the downfall of the fascist regimes in Greece, Portugal and Spain.

[14] But where imperialism still prevails, fascism has not been rooted out.

"Whenever there is a real danger to the rule of monopoly capital and its political stooges, imperialism is prepared to do anything, renouncing even the slightest semblance of democracy. It is prepared to trample on the sovereignty of states and all forms of legality, not to mention humanity."³ The installation of the fascist regime in Chile and other Latin American states is evidence of this, as are fascist terror and racism in South Africa and elsewhere. But even in the strongholds of imperialism, there is a growing tendency in the most reactionary circles of the ruling class to steer bourgeois parliamentary democracy into authoritarian channels and dismantle it in the face of increasing signs of crisis in the capitalist system. The "crisis management" methods of fascism are being questioned more and more openly by these forces as to their current usefulness; the masses are increasingly being presented with supposedly positive aspects of the fascist state such as "discipline and order" and full employment. These are the circles that decisively represent the military-industrial complex, push the arms race and want to replace the policy of détente with the policy of the Cold War and balancing on the brink of nuclear war, and also want to use fascism for this purpose.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, in: *Lenin, Werke*, Bd. Berlin 1960, p. 273.

² A. A. Galkin, *Germanskij fašizm*, Moscow 1967, p. 3.

³ XXV Party Congress of the CPSU. Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the next tasks of the party in domestic and foreign policy. Rapporteur: L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU, February 24, 1976, Berlin 1976, p. 38.

Anyone who conducts scientific research on fascism is aware that he is not dealing with a historically settled subject, but that he is participating directly in the class struggle of our time, in the struggle of the peoples against imperialism, for peace and socialism. Marxist-Leninist research into fascism stands at one of the most important stages of the struggle between progress and reaction, between the masses fighting for genuine democracy and socialism and those forces that seek to prevent any progress in this direction, even by the most extreme means. Research into fascism is at the same time one of the main areas of conflict between Marxist and bourgeois ideology.

The fascist analysis of the revolutionary workers' movement has proven to be the only scientific explanation of the fascist phenomenon compared to all other theories of fascism. The exposure of the class character of fascism by the Marxist-Leninists has, since the 1920s, brought whole regiments of bourgeois historians, sociologists and publicists onto the scene, who have endeavored in vain to refute this analysis. The motive for these strenuous efforts, which have been particularly intensive in the last ten years, was admitted by the American historian Henry A. Turner Jr. - probably more involuntarily than intentionally - when he slipped out the statement that modern capitalism could hardly be defended if the thesis that fascism was its product were true.⁴

Based on the foundation of many years of practical political struggle, the Marxist-Leninist analysis of fascism underwent constant further development through the processing and theoretical generalization of new experiences of class struggle. At the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, it was raised to the level of a precise and comprehensive analysis encompassing the conditions of emergence and development, class character and mass base, function and characteristics, ideology and practice of fascism.⁵

In his closing speech at this congress, Georgi Dimitroff also outlined the methodological line for future Marxist-Leninist research into fascism when he said: "No general characterization of fascism, however correct it may be in itself, relieves us of the duty to study and take into account the specific nature of the development of fascism and the various forms of fascist dictatorship in individual countries and at different stages ... It would be a gross mistake to try to draw up any general scheme of the development of fascism for all countries and all peoples. Such a scheme would not help us, but would prevent us from waging the real struggle."⁶

Since then, more than 40 years of relentless struggle against the fascist enemy have added to the wealth of experience of the communists and all other anti-fascist forces. Today, when détente and arms limitation with the aim of genuine disarmament are the order of the day, when at the same time the most reactionary imperialist forces, above all the militarist and financial capitalist leadership circles of the USA and NATO, are reviving and promoting fascism under new conditions and often in new forms in various regions of the capitalist world, Since bourgeois fascism "experts" and the mass media in the strongholds of capitalism, especially in the Federal Republic of Germany, are increasingly openly rehabilitating and propagating fascism alongside the veiled apology of fascism, the academic study of fascism from yesterday and today is becoming increasingly relevant. Marxist researchers everywhere are taking this into account, above all scientists from the Soviet Union.⁷ The important contribution made by researchers from

⁴ Henry Ashby Turner Jr, *Fascism and Capitalism. Studien zum Verhältnis zwischen Nationalsozialismus und Wirtschaft*, Göttingen 1972, p. 7.

⁵ VII Congress of the Communist International. Papers and Resolutions, Berlin 1975.

⁶ Georgi Dimitroff, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. 2, Berlin 1958, p. 629 f.

⁷ Reference should be made above all to the work *Istorija fašizma v Zapadnoj Evrope*, which was prepared by a collective of authors under the direction of G. S. Filatov (Moscow 1978); also L. I. Gincberg, *Na puti v imperskuju kancelariju*, Moscow 1972; Galkin, *Germanskij fašizm*; the same, *Sociologija neofašizma*, Moscow 1971; *Kritika ideologii neofašizma*, Moscow 1976; A. S. Blank, *Advokaty fašizma*, Moscow 1974.

The contribution of the socialist countries to this was expressed not least at various international scientific conferences in recent years.⁸

Research into fascism in the GDR has produced important work in a number of areas of investigation. This concerns above all the uncovering of the connection between imperialism and fascism, the analysis of the expansion and war policy of fascist German imperialism, the investigation of the development of the fascism theory of the Communist International and the criticism of bourgeois fascism theories.⁹

Of course, in the GDR, the socialist German state, research into the anti-fascist resistance struggle during the fascist dictatorship was and still is at the forefront of the overall topic of fascism.¹⁰ However, the interest in a successful struggle against fascism also makes it necessary to subject fascism itself to the most comprehensive academic investigation possible as a separate object of research. This is the primary concern of this volume. The inseparable unity of Marxist-Leninist research into fascism and the anti-fascist struggle is also evident in this book from the fact that several articles have been included which deal specifically with the elaboration of the theory and practice of the anti-fascist struggle by the international and German revolutionary workers' movement.

This anthology summarizes the state of fascism research in the GDR and at the same time goes beyond it by taking up new topics, raising new problems and presenting new research findings. Questions of the development of Marxist-Leninist fascist theory and the history of German fascism take up the most space. In addition, however, problems of the history of non-German fascism, questions of fascism after 1945 and special questions of the confrontation with bourgeois or non-Marxist conceptions of fascism are also dealt with.

The basic theoretical question of all the contributions in this volume is the problem of the class character of fascism. Based on the definition of the class nature of fascism by the VII World Congress of the Communist International, a wealth of facts and theoretical knowledge is evaluated and processed, which has been gained or brought to light in the course of more than 40 years of historical development and experience since then.

The main substantive aspect of the volume is therefore the deepening of knowledge about the connection between imperialism and fascism and between socialism and democracy. The monopoly bourgeoisie is shown to be the force that breeds fascism and uses it as a weapon in the class struggle with the aim of destroying the revolutionary workers' movement and all bourgeois-democratic rights and achievements of the working people in order to secure and expand profit and power.

It highlights the role of the working class and its revolutionary vanguard as the strongest, most consistent and most organized anti-fascist force, which, on the basis of scientific knowledge of the nature of fascism, shows all other anti-fascist forces the way to the common struggle against fascism. The volume thus deepens this knowledge,

⁸ The conferences in Moscow in 1971, in Essen in 1973, in Wrocław in 1974, in Zagreb in 1975 and in Kiev and Debrecen in 1978 should be mentioned here.

⁹ See *Historische Forschungen in der DDR 1960-1970. Analysen und Berichte zum XIII. Internationalen Historikerkongress in Moskau 1970*, in: *ZfG, Sonderband 1970*; Lotte Zumppe, *Stand und Probleme der wirtschaftshistorischen Imperialismusforschung*, in: *ZfG*, 5/1975, p. 494 ff.; Kurt Gossweiler, *Stand und Probleme der Faschismusforschung in der DDR*, in: *Bulletin des Arbeitskreises "Zweiter Weltkrieg"*, 1/1976, p. 4 ff.

¹⁰ Representative of a wealth of titles are *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. 5, Berlin 1966; Siegfried Vietzke, *Die KPD auf dem Weg zur Brüsseler Konferenz*, Berlin 1966; Klaus Mammach, *Die deutsche anti-faschistische Widerstandsbewegung 1933-1939*, Berlin 1974. A complete overview of the literature on anti-fascist resistance in Germany is provided by the bibliography by Rudi Goguel, *Antifaschistischer Widerstand und Klassenkampf. The Fascist Dictatorship 1933 to 1945 and its Opponents. Bibliography of German-language literature from 1945 to 1973*, Berlin 1976.

that a consistent anti-fascist struggle must at the same time be waged against imperialism and be directed at undermining the roots of fascism - the rule of finance capital.

A number of current topics and new issues of great academic and political interest are dealt with. Examples include the problem complexes of fascism and state-monopoly capitalism, fascism [17] and racism, fascism and the working class, neo-fascism, fascism in Latin America, and the development of the Marxist-Leninist theory of fascism.

The volume is designed as a contribution to the debate on the bourgeois fascist apology and theory. This debate is mainly directed against the most reactionary varieties of bourgeois views, i.e. against theories that are openly pro-imperialist or pro-monopoly. However, it is also led against "left" theories, such as the Bonapartism theory and ultra-left fascism theories. Special contributions are devoted to the presentation of the fascist views of the Socialist Workers' International and the Social Democratic Party of Germany. The latest bourgeois fascism literature is subjected to an in-depth critique.

To the extent that this volume has succeeded in broadening the solid foundation of the analysis of Marxist fascism in important fundamental questions and in providing new impulses for future research, this is largely due to the fact that the advantages of disciplinary and interdisciplinary cooperation have been utilized. Historians, economic historians, philosophers, economists, political scientists and legal scholars have all contributed to this volume.¹¹ This certainly does not exhaust the possibilities of academic cooperation, but it has already made it possible to deal with a relatively broad spectrum of topics and problems.

It is the intention of the editors and authors to contribute to the revitalization of the debate among Marxist scholars, to fruitful reflections and discussions on open, controversial and unresolved questions raised and dealt with in the contributions. The agreement of all the authors in the volume on the basic question of the class character of fascism by no means excludes different views on other questions, as is shown, for example, in the assessment of the significance of the working class as an object of fascist propaganda in various contributions.

After all, the reader will miss some of the topics that they expect to find in such a volume in the table of contents. There are undeniably some gaps here that can only be filled by later publications, future research and extended academic cooperation, especially on an international level. For example, there are no specific contributions on fascism in the countries of south-eastern Europe, Italy, Portugal and Spain. As a result, there are only initial approaches to comparative studies of fascist movements and regimes in different countries and to a typology of fascist dictatorships.

There is also a lack of research on the final phase of the fascist regimes in Greece, Portugal and Spain. Such a study would be of considerable current importance, as it would provide important information on the factors of stability and instability as well as on the dialectic of the anti-fascist struggle and the lawful process of decomposition of such regimes.

In addition, the development of fascism in the decades since the Seventh World Congress requires thorough special investigation from the point of view of the development of new traits and characteristics of fascism in the political and ideological field, caused in particular by the compulsion to adapt to the changed conditions of existence of imperialism after the Second World War.

¹¹ We would like to take this opportunity to thank the academies, universities, institutes and archives that supported the work by willingly assisting the authors.

These and other gaps and unanswered questions in research on fascism in the GDR [18] must be clearly marked in this volume. This can only be an incentive for those working in the field of fascism research to help close these gaps.

The claim and concern of the volume is satisfied if, as a first step on the way to comprehensive research into the historical and current political problems of fascism, it provides scientific material for today's fight against fascism and imperialism, if it makes a contribution to the international discussion on the history and theory of fascism and at the same time provides suggestions and impulses for future, further research and work in Marxist social sciences.

The editors

[21]

Part I: Fascism and imperialism

Elfriede Lewerenz: On the determination of the imperialist nature of fascism by the Communist International (1922 to 1935)

The Communist International (CI), which came into being as a result of the Great October Socialist Revolution and embodied the stage of the emergence and maturation of the world communist movement, has during its existence taken a stand on all questions arising in the international class struggle in the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism and developed answers that have enriched Marxism-Leninism. This also applied to the confrontation with fascism, whose emergence and especially its rise to power in Italy in October 1922 posed complicated problems for the entire working class. New questions such as the following arose:

- What forces are behind fascism?
- Whose interests does he represent?
- Is fascism an Italian peculiarity or an international phenomenon?
- Is fascism an inevitable stage in the development of capitalist society?

From the very beginning, the efforts of the CI concentrated single-mindedly on determining the class character of fascism, because the correct orientation for the anti-fascist struggle of the communist parties and the working class depended on this.

Even before the fascists came to power in Italy, the journal "The Communist International" commented on the appearance and development of the fascist movement in Italy.¹ These first articles already stated that the fascist gangs were taking up "a bloody struggle against the Italian proletariat"² in the interests of capitalism and militarism and that fascism was "the fighting group of finance and industrial capital".³ The approach to the confrontation with fascism that was characteristic of the communists was already evident here, namely the examination of its place in the class struggle, in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Although these articles overestimated the importance of the petty-bourgeois composition of the [22] fascist movement for the overall assessment of fascism, they proved the counter-revolutionary role of fascism early on. The great difficulty in precisely analyzing the nature of fascism, especially at the beginning of its development, was to correctly connect two elements: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the movement of the petty-bourgeois masses.⁴ The deliberations of the Fourth Congress of the CI from November 5 to December 5, 1922, at which the communist movement for the first time dealt intensively with the role of fascism in the international class struggle and the tasks of the anti-fascist struggle, also bore witness to this. Just a few weeks after the fascists came to power in Italy, the CI developed an accurate assessment of the class character of fascism at this congress. This should be valued all the more highly as the contradictory phenomena in

¹ See Ardito Rosso (i.e. Vittorio Ambrosini), Perspektiven und Lehren der revolutionären Krisis in Italien, in: Die Kommunistische Internationale, 18/1921, p. 114 ff.; W., Der III. Kongreß der Faschisten (7. bis 11. November 1921), in: Ebenda, 19/1921, p. 103 ff. - On the analysis of fascism by the CI, see now also Istorija fašizma v Zapadnoj Evrope, ch. IX, Moscow 1978.

² Rosso, p. 118.

³ W., The Third Congress of the Fascists, p. 103.

⁴ See Palmiro Togliatti, Lektionen über den Faschismus, Frankfurt a. M. 1973, p. 8 - On methodological questions of research into the analysis of fascism by the Comintern, see K. K. Schirinja/Horst Schumacher, Der Kampf der internationalen Arbeiterbewegung gegen den Faschismus (bis Mitte der dreißiger Jahre), in: BzG, 1/1975; Vavangarde bor'by za mir i social'nyi progress (teoretičeskio vyvody VII Kongressa kominterna i sovremennost'), in: Voprosy filosofii, 8/1975, pp. 4 ff.; see also W. Jeshow, Herkunft und Klassenwesen des Faschismus, in: Gesellschaftswissenschaften 4/1977, p. 86 ff.

of social development at the beginning of the new era allowed for different interpretations. This was also reflected in the deliberations of the Fourth Congress. When G. J. Sinovev's paper, for example, stated that capitalism was on the eve of its downfall and that it would not find a way out of the situation that had arisen, such an assessment also had to have an effect on the characterization of fascism. On the one hand, fascism was correctly described as an act of counter-revolution, but on the other hand it was also seen as a revolutionary factor.⁵ The Fourth Congress of the CI clearly expressed that, despite the historical "period of decline" of capitalism, fascism represents an *offensive* of the bourgeoisie against the working class. In the theses "On the Tactics of the Comintern", which were unanimously adopted by the Congress, it says: "Closely connected with the offensive of capital in the economic field is the political offensive of the bourgeoisie against the working class, as it manifests itself most blatantly in international fascism. Since the increasing impoverishment is revolutionizing the masses more and more, also affecting the middle class, including the civil servants, and shaking the bourgeoisie's certainty of having an absolutely compliant and sufficient tool in the bureaucracy, the legal methods of support are no longer sufficient for the bourgeoisie. It has therefore begun to create special white guards everywhere, which are specifically directed against all revolutionary aspirations of the proletariat and serve more and more to brutally crush every attempt by the workers to improve their situation."⁶

By clearly stating that fascism is an "offensive of the bourgeoisie against the working class", to which the bourgeoisie moves from its position weakened by the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in order to try to turn back the wheel of history, the CI already answered basic questions of the analysis of fascism. It thus characterized the bourgeois class character of fascism and its counter-revolutionary function in the national and international class struggle. She also pointed out that the socio-economic roots of fascism lie in the capitalist system. Based on this assessment, the congress also declared that fascism had no special

"Italian affair", but was a danger to all capitalist countries in one form or another. From this the CI deduced that the struggle against fascism was a component of the struggle against the offensive of capital, i.e. a component of the international class struggle, which was characterized by the general crisis of capitalism and the growing international influence of the Soviet Union in the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism.

The role of the petty bourgeoisie, which made up the majority of the fascists' supporters, was discussed at the

IV. Congress of the CI still differed in their characterization of fascism. Sinovev⁷ and Karl Radek⁸ spoke directly of the petty-bourgeois character of fascism, because Italian fascism, unlike other terror regimes of the bourgeoisie, was based on a broad petty-bourgeois mass base.

In the aforementioned theses "On the Tactics of the Comintern", the Fourth Congress did not ignore this fact, but declared: "The characteristic feature of Italian fascism

... consists in the fact that the fascists not only form narrow counter-revolutionary fighting organizations, armed to the teeth, but also try to use social demagoguery to gain a foothold in the masses, in the peasantry, in the petty bourgeoisie, even in certain sections of the working class, skilfully exploiting the necessary disappointments with so-called democracy for their reactionary purposes."⁹

⁵ See Minutes of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, (hereinafter: Minutes of the Fourth Congress of the CI), Petrograd - Moscow, November 5 to December 5, 1922, Hamburg 1923, p. 58; see also Die Kommunistische Internationale. Kurzer historischer Abriß, Berlin 1970, p. 194; Erwin Lewin, Zur Faschismus-Analyse durch die Kommunistische Internationale (1922-1933), in: BzG, 1/1970, p. 44 ff.

⁶ Minutes of the Fourth Congress of the AI, p. 1011.

⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 919 f.

⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 314.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1011.

It became clear that the imperialist character and petty-bourgeois mass base of fascism were not mutually exclusive, but intertwined. The problem was to find out what connection existed between the class and mass basis of fascism. The CI had already grasped the essence of this problem at that time. It recognized that the bourgeoisie in fascism created "special white guards" for the struggle against the working class and also tried, with the help of social demagoguery, to create an active reactionary mass movement, above all among the petty bourgeoisie and the peasants, but also among the workers, whereby both elements were used by the bourgeoisie as means of struggle against the workers' movement; in other words, that the interests of the bourgeoisie constituted the defining moment of fascism.

The Fourth Congress of the CI also provided important information on other aspects that characterize fascism. It had already begun to define more precisely the circles of the bourgeoisie behind fascism. Even before their coup d'état, Antonio Gramsci described the Italian fascists as the "general staff of the landowners and bankers"¹⁰, and Giulio Aquila also spoke of the fascists [24] having an agrarian and an industrial wing.¹¹ In contrast, Amadeo Bordiga, then leader of the Italian Communist Party, was of the opinion that fascism could not be attributed to the interests of a certain section of the bourgeoisie. He said: "Fascism embodies the counter-revolutionary struggle of all allied bourgeois elements, and therefore it is by no means absolutely necessary for it to destroy democratic institutions."¹²

What was essential and necessary for the orientation of the struggle of the working class against fascism at this time was first and foremost that the CI exposed its bourgeois, imperialist class character and its counter-revolutionary function in the sense of the entire bourgeoisie against the working class. In addition, it at least made attempts to differentiate within the bourgeoisie by speaking of fascism as a form of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie "in the form of its most energetic wing" in the "Resolution on the Italian Question".¹³ At the heart of the matter, the approaches to differentiation were also reflected in the attitude towards bourgeois democracy. While Bordiga, for example, was of the opinion "that fascism will be liberal and democratic"¹⁴, the theses adopted by the Fourth Congress "On the Tactics of the Comintern" contained the extraordinarily significant indication that the open rule of fascism "is at the same time directed against the foundations of bourgeois democracy in general"¹⁵.

At the Fourth Congress, the CI earned the indisputable merit of being the only political force to have recognized the imperialist class character of fascism at an early stage. With its first official statement on fascism, it grasped the actual core questions that constituted its essence and were of significance for its entire further development. In addition to characterizing the imperialist nature of fascism, the CI had taken a stand on the petty-bourgeois mass base and the interrelationship between the two; it had identified the political thrust of fascism, which was primarily directed against the working class, but had also already stated that it was directed against the foundations of democracy as a whole; It had demonstrated the international character of fascism from the point of view of its imperialist class nature, addressed the differentiation within the imperialist bourgeoisie and drew attention to the offensive as well as defensive character of fascism. In doing so, it laid the foundation for the scientific analysis of fascism and gave

¹⁰ Quoted from Guido Zamis, Antonio Gramsci - Geistiger Gründer und Führer der Kommunistischen Partei Italiens, in: BzG, 1/1974, p. 119.

¹¹ Giulio Aquila (i.e. Gyula Sas), Fascism in Power, in: The Communist Internationale, 24-25/1923, p. 66 f.

¹² Minutes of the Fourth Congress of the AI, p. 341 f.

¹³ Ibid., p. 998.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 347.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 1012.

at the same time the right orientation for the anti-fascist struggle. In the theses "On the Tactics of the Comintern", the Fourth Congress of the CI described it as one of the most important tasks of the Comintern parties "to organize resistance against international fascism, to lead the entire working class in the struggle against the fascist gangs and to vigorously apply the tactics of the united front in this field as well".¹⁶

However, the analysis of fascism as a whole had to remain incomplete, since [25] the insights could only be perfected in the process of the unfolding of the various sides of fascism and the subjective maturity of the CI. The scientifically exact analysis of fascism by the CI therefore took place in a years-long struggle under the most diverse objective conditions, in confrontation with the changing strategy and tactics of the bourgeoisie and, above all, depending on how fascism further developed its class traits and the role it played in the international class struggle. For this reason, it would be unhistorical and bashful to accuse the CI of not having its first assessments of fascism at the beginning of the 1920s at the level of, for example, the definition of the XIIIth session of the ECCI.

As Palmiro Togliatti pointed out in his "Lessons on Fascism", the documents of the CI show that on certain occasions and at different times there were different assessments of this or that side of fascism¹⁷ ; but the documents prove above all that the CI, in contrast to all other political movements including the social democratic¹⁸ , recognized the core problem in the exposure of the class character of fascism and, through its correct solution, was put in a position to better and better classify all individual phenomena and evaluate them in a complex.

Their ability to do so grew in proportion to their assimilation of Marxism-Leninism and their ability to creatively apply Lenin's theory of imperialism. "*One cannot,*" as Togliatti stated, "*determine the nature of fascism if one does not know imperialism.*"¹⁹ The fact that the CI always stood on the ground of Lenin's theory of imperialism in the political class struggle also enabled it to assess fascism in class terms from the outset.

The rise to power of the fascists in Italy had given a noticeable boost to the fascist movement in other countries. In Germany, too, the fascist movement grew, particularly in connection with the occupation of the Ruhr at the beginning of 1923. In Bulgaria, the military-fascist coup of June 9, 1923 led to the removal of a bourgeois-democratic government by a reactionary regime of terror in another country. These events lent particular importance to the discussions on fascism at the Third Extended Conference of the ECCI from June 12 to 23, 1923. Clara Zetkin, who gave the speech on the fight against fascism, emphasized right at the beginning that the proletariat had an "extraordinarily dangerous and terrible enemy before it" in fascism. "Fascism is the strongest, the most concentrated, it is the classic expression of the general offensive of the world bourgeoisie at this moment. To crush it is an elementary necessity." She went on to explain: "It is obvious that the more clearly and sharply we recognize its nature and the effects of its nature, the sooner we will overcome this treacherous enemy."²⁰ In this respect, the meeting reaffirmed the assessment of the imperialist class character of fascism made by the Fourth Congress and underlined the intrinsic connection between the development of capitalism in the [26] period of its general crisis and the rise of fascist movements. Contrary to the views of some reformist leaders who saw in fascism an expression of the strength of the imperialist class.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Togliatti, p. 7.

¹⁸ See the contributions by Werner Kowalski and Heinz Niemann in this volume.

¹⁹ Togliatti, p. 9.

²⁰ Minutes of the Conference of the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International, (hereinafter: Minutes of the Enlarged Executive 1923), Moscow June 12-23, 1923, Hamburg 1923, p. 204 f.

While the proletariat was not up to the challenge of bourgeois class rule, the assessments of the Third Extended Conference of the ECCI were based on the conviction of the strength and historical role of the working class in the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism. Clara Zetkin declared that fascism, "however vigorously it may behave, is an outgrowth of the disintegration and decay of the capitalist economy" and a symptom of the lability of the bourgeois state; this assessment was also adopted in the resolution "On Fascism".²¹

In her presentation, Clara Zetkin dealt in detail with the fascist mass base. Using the development of Italy as the hitherto "classic example" of fascism, she examined above all the conditions under which the fascists were able to create a mass base. In polemics against social democratic views, which saw fascism as nothing more than a terror regime or the causes of fascism exclusively in the bourgeoisie's counter-reaction to the Great October Socialist Revolution, Clara Zetkin demonstrated in her explanations of the mass base that the social roots for the fact that dissatisfied people who have been thrown off their social track can be turned into supporters of fascism with the help of demagogic slogans and exploited against the workers' movement in the interests of the ruling class lie in the capitalist system itself. The fact that after the victory of the October Revolution in a country gripped by revolutionary ferment like Italy, the bourgeoisie was once again able to win a mass base for the maintenance of its rule with the help of a reactionary, terrorist movement was a surprising, new experience for the CI.

With the aim of winning the majority of the working class for the struggle for socialism, it had adopted the policy of the united front at its Third Congress from June 22 to July 12, 1921. With the growing fascist danger, it included the struggle against fascism as a decisive objective in the united front policy.

Even if the preoccupation with the fascist mass base was a priority for the CI in those years and its importance was overestimated on various occasions, including by Clara Zetkin,²² the CI did not deduce the class character of fascism from the petty-bourgeois nature of its followers. Nor did it ever treat the fascist movement as a phenomenon detached from the interests of the bourgeoisie, but always revealed the connection between the emergence of fascism and the objective conditions of development of capitalism in the period of its general crisis. The CI also emphasized at the Third Extended Session of the ECCI that fascism carries out the policy of big capital, that the bourgeoisie is the cause of fascism, and that the bourgeoisie is the cause of fascism.

"nourishes and maintains" and "promotes its development with all the means of money and political power at its disposal".²³ The true character of fascism is revealed when it comes to power, because then the fascist state turns out to be "a vulgar, crude bourgeois class state" whose policies "serve the interests of industrial capital".²⁴

[27] The CI again emphasized that fascism is an international phenomenon and that in principle the possibility of its emergence exists in all imperialist countries. On the basis of existing experience, particularly in Italy and Bulgaria, the CI also pointed out that fascism could take on "different characteristics in different countries", but emphasized that "everywhere ... its essence consists of a combination of the most brutal, terrorist violence with a pseudo-revolutionary phraseology that demagogically ties in with the needs and moods of the broad, creative masses"²⁵.

In the tasks for the anti-fascist struggle of the communists formulated in the resolution "On Fascism", the CI drew attention to a new characteristic feature of fascism.

²¹ Ibid., p. 207; see also p. 293.

²² See *ibid.*, p. 205.

²³ Ibid., p. 211; see also Togliatti, p. 20.

²⁴ Minutes of the Enlarged Executive 1923, p. 223, p. 296.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 295; the resolution "On Fascism" was adopted unanimously.

attention. It obliged the communists in the parliaments to emphasize the "imperialist and arch-chauvinist character of fascism in the various countries", "which increases the danger of new international wars".²⁶ The LII. This was understood to mean the fact, dealt with using the example of Italy, that the bourgeoisie, with the help of fascism, seeks to forcibly eliminate or bridge the class antagonism and the inner-imperialist antagonisms, but that the establishment of the fascist dictatorship additionally creates new antagonisms which, together with the old ones, must in the long run decompose fascism.²⁷

Clara Zetkin deduced the inevitability of the growing instability of the fascist regime in Italy from the observation of these contradictions. However, she and others overestimated this instability because fascism was still seen too one-sidedly as a product of the weakness and decay of the capitalist order.

However, the CI warned against passively waiting for the collapse of fascism, but instead set itself the task of "consciously and actively accelerating and promoting" the escalation of the contradictions within fascism.²⁸

The correct assessment of the contradiction between fascism and bourgeois democracy was also of great importance, since it depended on whether the possibilities for organizing a broad anti-fascist struggle were fully recognized. This realization was not yet common knowledge in the CI at that time; it was particularly pronounced by representatives of the communist parties in whose countries fascism was in power. Thus Georgi Dimitroff endeavored to make it clear to the masses via the Bulgarian party press that fascism meant "the complete denial of all democratism and all political rights and freedoms of the masses". He made the significant statement: "Fascism is not only anti-communist, it is also anti-popular"²⁹, thus emphasizing a characteristic trait of fascism arising from its imperialist nature. Antonio Gramsci, who from the outset had attached great importance to differentiating more precisely between the class forces and political currents of bourgeois society, declared at a party activist meeting of the Italian Communist Party in the summer of 1925: "The Italian people are not fighting at this moment for the dictatorship of the proletariat, but for democracy."³⁰

To summarize, at the Third Extended Session of the ECCI, the CI reaffirmed its assessments of fascism made at the Fourth Congress. It now also emphatically pointed out the chauvinism stemming from its imperialist nature and the growing danger of war emanating from fascism, as well as the contrast between fascist dictatorship and bourgeois democracy. However, these individual aspects were not yet understood in their context and evaluated as a whole in the way they were twelve years later at the Seventh Congress. The analysis did not cover all sides equally; some were overestimated in their significance, some underestimated. Of course, this was mainly due to the relative underdevelopment of fascism itself in those years.

The new processes in the world capitalist system that began in the mid-1920s once again presented the CI with complicated problems and tasks. It became apparent that fascism was not the "last card in the game of the bourgeoisie" and could not only lead to an ever deeper disintegration of the capitalist system, but that there were also signs of a stabilization of capitalism in fascist Italy.³¹

²⁶ Ibid., p. 297.

²⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 223 ff., p. 295 ff.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 296 ff.

²⁹ Georgi Dimitroff, *Die Einheitsfront und die bürgerliche Reaktion*, in: G. Dimitroff, *Ausgewählte Werke*, Vol. I, Sofia 1967, p. 206; see also Georgij Dimitrov - *vydajuščijsja dejatel' kommunističeskogo dviženija*, Moscow 1972, p. 192.

³⁰ Quoted from *Zamis*, p. 119.

³¹ See Eugen Varga, *Wirtschaft und Wirtschaftspolitik im IV. Vierteljahr 1924*, in: *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz Sondernummer*, 21/1925.

AI had to penetrate the economic processes that brought about the stabilization of the capitalist system. Up to this point, there were still differing opinions within the CI about the developmental tendencies of capitalism.³² At the congress of the CI from June 17 to July 12, 1924, these became particularly apparent in the assessment of the international situation at the end of the post-war revolutionary crisis, when the complicated question of the future perspective of the world revolution had to be answered.³³ Differing views still clashed, particularly in the assessment of imperialism, as there were still numerous supporters of Rosa Luxemburg's theory of accumulation. For example, in the discussion of the CI's draft program, no agreement could yet be reached on the basis of Lenin's theory of imperialism³⁴, which was also one of the reasons for postponing the adoption of the CI's program until the VI Congress.

However, the recognition and correct evaluation of the processes in imperialism became more and more important for the orientation in the international class struggle. This proved to be the case when the CI characterized the new period as a period of *relative* stabilization of capitalism; this assessment was only possible on the basis of Lenin's theory of imperialism and the recognition that capitalism has historically been in its "period of decline", its general crisis, since the Great October Socialist Revolution.³⁵

At the Fifth Congress, the CI again dealt with fascism. It characterized it as "the instrument of struggle of the *big bourgeoisie* against the proletariat" (emphasis mine - E. L.) and as "one of the classical forms of counter-revolution in the period of decay of the capitalist social order".³⁶ By naming the big bourgeoisie, the Fifth Congress defined the bearers of fascism more precisely. The Fifth Congress separated the two questions more clearly than before: the question of the class character of fascism and the question of the social composition of the fascist movement.³⁷ In dealing with these questions, the main attention was given to the study of the social composition of the fascist movement, because it was seen as the weakest point of fascism; however, the importance of the internal contradictions in fascism was overestimated.

The fact that various delegates at the Fifth Congress associated social democracy with manifestations of fascism had a negative effect on the further analysis of fascism. From the point of view of the same class content of fascist dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, the CI came to see fascism and social democracy as two sides of "one and the same tool of big capitalist dictatorship".³⁸ This meant a significant departure from the insights of the Fourth Congress regarding the contradictions between fascism and bourgeois democracy.³⁹ The increased influence of sectarian forces certainly played a part in the fact that assessments of this kind found their way into official CI documents. Bordiga, in particular, explicitly stated in his presentation that fascism was merely repeating the old game of the bourgeois left-wing parties and social democracy and that

³² See the report on the drafts for the program of the AI at the Enlarged Executive of June 1923, in: Minutes of the Enlarged Executive 1923, p. 247.

³³ See Gisela Jähn, Für die Durchsetzung des Marxismus-Leninismus! On the 50th anniversary of the '1st Congress of the Communist International', in: BzG, 4/1974, p. 549 ff.

³⁴ See Minutes. Fünfter Kongreß der Kommunistischen Internationale, (in the following: Protokoll, Fünfter Kongreß), Vol. II, Hamburg 1924, p. 511 f., p. 574; see also M. I. Suvorova, Komintern v bor'be s melkoburžuaznymi ekonomičeskimi teorijami, Moscow 1969, p. 58 ff.

³⁵ See Minutes. Extended Executive of the Communist International, Moscow, March 21-April 6, 1925, Hamburg 1925, p. 23 ff.; see also Jörg Goldberg, Methodische und theoretische Probleme in Vargas Vierteljahresberichten, in: E. Varga, Wirtschaft und Wirtschaftspolitik, Bd. 1, Vorworte, Wirtschaftskonferenzen 1922, Inhaltsverzeichnis, (West-)Berlin (1977), p. 54 ff.

³⁶ Theses and Resolutions of the V. World Congress of the Communist International, Hamburg 1924, p. 121.

³⁷ Ibid; see also B. M. Lejbzon/K. K. Šchirinja, Povорот v politike Kominterna. Istoričeskoe značenie VII. kongressa Kominterna. Izdanie vtoroe, pererabotannoe i dopolnennoe, Moscow 1975, p. 150.

³⁸ See Theses and Resolutions of the V. World Congress of the AI, p. 121.

³⁹ See Lejbzon/Šchirinja, p. 151.

nothing would change in the old classical system of bourgeois-democratic governments.⁴⁰ But one must also bear in mind that the Fifth Congress took place during the transition from the revolutionary post-war crisis to the relative stabilization of capitalism, so that some processes were particularly difficult to understand. One should also bear in mind the fact that, for example, the fascist rulers in Italy attempted to "create a non-totalitarian fascist regime" until 1925⁴¹, i.e. that the fascist regimes at the beginning of the 1920s had essentially retained parliamentary forms in which, in some cases, even representatives of social democracy attempted to become involved.⁴² It is therefore at least explainable that the differences between bourgeois democracy and fascist dictatorship could not be characterized as clearly as in the 1930s.

After the Fourth Congress, with the Bolshevization of the communist parties, the planned appropriation of Marxism-Leninism in all its components began, combined with the study of the rich fighting experience of the CPSU(B). In this process, the CI increasingly acquired the "ability to apply the general principles of Leninism to the given concrete situation in one country or another".⁴³ The further analysis of fascism became more and more closely linked to the creative application of Lenin's theory of imperialism.

The mid-1920s also marked a certain turning point in the development of fascism. In Italy, the "construction of the total fascist state" began after the Matteotti crisis in 1925⁴⁴. This meant, among other things, the elimination of the last remnants of the bourgeois parliamentary system, the abolition of all democratic rights and freedoms, the dissolution of the parties and the concentration of the means of power in the hands of the fascists. With the help of corporatism, the economic and social policy of the state was adapted even more closely to the interests of the big bourgeoisie.

At the same time, however, with the onset of the relative stabilization of capitalism in the majority of capitalist countries, fascist movements declined; the bourgeoisie was able to consolidate its rule within the framework of the bourgeois-democratic form of government.

The different developments in fascist Italy and in the other imperialist states had an impact on the further analysis of fascism by the CI. The processing of the new experience was most clearly reflected in a lecture by the Soviet theoretician J. Pašukanis on the fascist dictatorship, which he gave at the Communist Academy in Moscow in November 1926. He assumed that there had always been certain uncertainties in the assessment of fascism, because every observer saw only one side of the movement and considered it to be the most important; above all, the petty-bourgeois movement had always been noticed first. However, "today it is clear to every observer that Mussolini's dictatorship is not a dictatorship of the petty bourgeoisie and not a dictatorship of the agrarians, but a dictatorship of big industrial and *financial capital*. The entire economic policy of the fascist government is clear enough proof of this."⁴⁵ He then raised the question of why the dictatorship of capital takes this form, since the fascist state does not differ in the direction of its policy from other states of big capital such as France and the USA. After a detailed examination of the development of fascism in Italy in the context of the class struggle conditions of the new epoch, he drew the conclusion: "In general, the fascist regime can be defined as a dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, which is not realized by the subtle means of electoral mechanics, the dumbing down of the electorate, not by the alternation of different parties, programmes and political cliques, but by the direct, open rule of a political

⁴⁰ See Protocol, Fifth Congress, Vol. II, p. 719, p. 723 f.

⁴¹ Togliatti, p. 21.

⁴² Ibid., p. 26 f.; see also Josef Schleifstein, Zum historischen Hintergrund der "Sozialfaschismus"-These, in: Varga, Wirtschaft und Wirtschaftspolitik, vol. 1, p. 133 ff.

⁴³ Extended Executive (March/April 1925), Theses on Resolutions, (Hamburg 1925), p. 14.

⁴⁴ Togliatti, p. 21.

⁴⁵ J. Pašukanis, Zur Charakteristik der faschistischen Diktatur, in: Unter dem Banner des Marxismus, II. Jahrgang, 3/1928, p. 282.

party based on its own armed power. Such a form of government assures the bourgeoisie an unprecedented concentration of power and the possibility of a vigorous struggle against the danger of proletarian revolution and against its imperialist rivals."⁴⁶ Pašukanis took up the statements made by the CI in 1922/23 on the contradiction between bourgeois democracy and fascism, but went an important step further by speaking of the fascist dictatorship as a new form of state of the bourgeoisie. It was certainly no coincidence that this was done in connection with the characterization of the fascist dictatorship as the "dictatorship of big *industrial and finance capital*".

The key question for the all-round analysis of the nature of fascism proved time and again to be the exact determination of its class character and, in connection with this, the precise identification of its form of rule.⁴⁷

The VI Congress of the CI from July 17 to September 1, 1928 occupied an important place in the process of analyzing fascism because it dealt particularly thoroughly with imperialism and its developmental tendencies.

During the preparations for the congress, the basic questions of the class struggle in the new epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism had been thoroughly discussed in connection with the further elaboration of the program of the CI. With the beginning of the period of relative stabilization of capitalism, it had become possible for the CI to determine the characteristics of the general crisis of capitalism more precisely, because the differences from the cyclical crisis were now clearly apparent. This - together with the analysis of the world situation - meant that the CI was able to uncover the contradictory processes in the imperialist system of rule in more detail than before. In addition, the need arose to deal intensively with the new wave of concentration and its effects. The investigation of these processes had logically led the Marxist-Leninist forces in the CI to an even more thorough study of Lenin's theory of imperialism. The confrontation with Trotskyism, which among other things denied the existence of the law of uneven development in capitalism, also required a deeper penetration into Lenin's theory of imperialism and its defense against all falsifications.⁴⁸

The success of this process was reflected in the program of the Communist International adopted by the VI Congress, in which Lenin's analysis of imperialism was taken as the basis for the corresponding section.⁴⁹

At the VI Congress, the CI dealt more thoroughly than before with the examination of the role of the monopolies and the characterization of finance capital.⁵⁰ It emphasized [32] Lenin's insight that monopoly is the source of the sharpening of all contradictions in imperialism.⁵¹ This fact gained in importance because "in the field of economics an extraordinarily rapid growth of capitalist monopolies (cartels, trusts and banking syndicates) can be observed", according to the resolution "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International".⁵²

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 315.

⁴⁷ In the following, the article will focus primarily on these two questions.

⁴⁸ See History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Vol. IV: The Communist Party in the Struggle for the Construction of Socialism in the USSR 1921-1937, First Book, 1921-1929, Moscow 1973, p. 503; Minutes. Extended Executive of the Communist International, Moscow, November 22-December 16, 1926, Hamburg/Berlin 1927, p. 88 ff., p. 163; see also Horst Schumacher, Zur Aneignung der Leninschen Revolutionstheorie durch die Kommunistische Internationale, in: Evolution und Revolution in der Weltgeschichte. Ernst Engelberg on his 65th birthday, vol. I, Berlin 1976, p. 117 ff.

⁴⁹ See Program of the Communist International, in: Protocol. Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, (hereinafter: Protocol, Sixth World Congress), Moscow, July 17-September 1, 1928, Vol. IV, Theses/Resolutions/Programme/Statutes, Hamburg/Berlin 1929, p. 48 ff.

⁵⁰ The main aim was to refute the false views of the Persian delegate [32] Sultan-Sade on finance capital, who denied the merging of industrial capital with bank capital (see Minutes, Sixth World Congress, Vol. II, Hamburg/Berlin 1931, p. 28 ff., p. 63, p. 95).

⁵¹ See *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 28 ff., p. 63 ff., p. 74, p. 95, p. 98 ff.

⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 14.

In contrast to the theories of right-wing social-democratic leaders of "organized capitalism" and also to the Trotskyist views according to which the rule of the monopolies and finance capital reduces the unevenness in the development of capitalist countries, the CI proved - as V. I. Lenin had already told Karl Kautsky⁵³ - that the competition between the monopolies within a country persists and that this "gives rise to a series of particularly severe and profound contradictions, frictions and conflicts".⁵⁴ The uneven development of capitalism is not abolished, but is intensified, which leads to an intensification of the contradictions between the capitalist countries.

At the VI Congress, the CI also took a stand on the process of merging the power of the monopolies with the power of the state. It included and subsumed it to a large extent under the term "State capitalism"⁵⁵. The VI Congress characterized this development most clearly in the aforementioned resolution on the international situation and the tasks of the CI. Already in the introduction to the resolution, the CI highlighted the tendencies towards "state capitalism" on the basis of the recent development of capitalism⁵⁶ and clearly stated in thesis 3 in connection with the rapid growth of the monopolies: "At the same time, a growth of state capitalist tendencies is also noticeable, both in the form of state capitalism in the original sense of this word (state-owned power stations, communal industrial and transport enterprises) and in the form of the ever stronger intergrowth of business organizations with the organs of state power."⁵⁷

The CI also drew attention to the fact that bourgeois state power would play a decisive role in this development. In the above-mentioned resolution it says: "This evolution of the relationship of state power to the business organizations, the concentration of all the forces of the bourgeoisie in the bourgeois state, is also causing a *reactionary transformation of the so-called 'bourgeois state order'* in all capitalist countries. This transformation, which is a characteristic expression of the present period of crisis of capitalism, manifests itself politically in the general crisis of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism" (emphasis mine - E. L.).⁵⁸

[33] These insights into the developmental tendencies of imperialism gained at the Sixth Congress led the CI to a deeper penetration into the nature of fascism, even though the formulations in question contained no direct reference to a connection with fascism. The placement of fascism in the CI program in the period of imperialism, the general crisis of capitalism and the class struggle conditions of the new epoch testifies to the fact that the VI Congress placed fascism in the context of the objective development tendencies of imperialism and the growth of the monopolies. In the discussions on fascism, too, the endeavor to clarify the question of the connection between the level of development of capitalist states and fascism was more evident than before. In the Program Commission, in which this question was primarily dealt with, two extreme opinions were initially expressed. Some of the members of the Program Commission were of the opinion that fascism existed in all highly developed capitalist countries, describing all reactionary tendencies to dismantle the parliamentary system and any use of terror as fascism.⁵⁹ Other members of the commission believed that fascism was characteristic only of backward countries or countries that did not have a parliamentary system.

⁵³ See V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, in: Lenin, *Werke*, vol. 22, Berlin 1960, p. 274 ff.

⁵⁴ Protocol, Sixth World Congress, Vol. IV, p. 50 - This passage in the program of the CI was taken almost verbatim from Lenin's work.

⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 95, p. 214, p. 216.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 13.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19; see also p. 51.

⁵⁹ See *Inprekorr*, 91/1928, p. 1716; 92/1928, p. 1727; Protocol, Sixth World Congress, p. 384, p. 448 f.; Vol. II, p. 184.

colonial property. In highly developed capitalist countries, one could therefore not speak of fascism.⁶⁰

Although the representatives of the first group correctly recognized the inherent tendency of imperialism, and especially state-monopoly capitalism, to dismantle democracy, they overlooked the fact that this tendency only leads to fascist dictatorship under certain conditions. A representative of the Polish Communist Party rightly emphasized the need to "examine the connection between fascist tendencies and the monopolistic character of modern capitalism".⁶¹ Representatives of the KPD and the Communist Party of Great Britain expressed similar views.⁶²

The views on fascism as a specific danger only for backward countries were rejected by the VI Congress. As a result of the program discussion on the question of fascism, on the other hand, the idea was again emphasized in the closing words that the growing reaction and "the *tendency* (emphasis mine - E. L.) to govern differently is caused by the development of modern capitalism, monopolistic capitalism ...' and, in comparison to other epochs of capitalist development, by the general instability of the capitalist order".⁶³ The CI thus not only pointed once again to the causal connection between the development of imperialism in the general crisis of capitalism and the tendencies towards fascism, but also explicitly emphasized the role of monopoly capital. This was of particular importance for the more precise definition of the actual bearers of fascism, because it rejected the views according to which fascism was a system of rule preferably for countries with only a weakly developed capitalist economic order[34] and signaled the danger of fascism even in highly developed capitalist countries. The definition contained in the programme characterized the fascist regime as

"terrorist dictatorship of big capital".⁶⁴ In the CI, the important idea was also expressed that the rise to power of fascism in highly developed capitalist countries did not necessarily have to take place through a coup, but that a gradual fascization of the bourgeois state by monopoly capital was more likely.⁶⁵ It is revealing that the delegates also repeatedly returned to the role of monopoly capital in the discussion on other questions of fascism.

Some delegates, in whose opinion the rule of fascism existed in all highly developed countries, expressed the view that they did not yet sufficiently understand how to distinguish between the lawful fascist tendencies in imperialism and the possible exercise of fascist power. This created the danger of describing every reactionary development in these countries as fascism; moreover, this view favored the view that fascism was an unavoidable final stage of imperialism. A representative of the Polish party, in which there had been thorough discussions about the assessment of fascism, explained that they had rejected the false view that "fascism was the normal, adequate, political superstructure of monopoly capitalism par excellence; a view that derives fascism from pure economics and detaches it from the social revolution".⁶⁶

At the VI Congress, the CI deepened its understanding of the social roots of fascism, without succumbing to the danger of absolutizing them and deriving from the economics of imperialism a lawfulness to fascism. The CI had the question of prevention or victory

⁶⁰ See Inprekorr, 92/1928, p. 1727 ff.; Protocol, Sixth World Congress, Vol. I, p. 339, p. 184.

⁶¹ Protocol, Sixth World Congress, Vol. I, p. 384.

⁶² See *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 55 f., p. 125 ff.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 184 f.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* vol. IV, p. 58.

⁶⁵ See J. Lenz, Sozialdemokratie und Faschismus, in: Die Kommunistische Internationale, 37/1928, p. 2305; see also Vladimír Suchopár, Kommunistická internacionála proti fašismu v letech 1921-1935, Prague 1964, p. 168 ff.

⁶⁶ Protocol, Sixth World Congress Vol. II, p. 76.

The party has always regarded fascism as a question to be decided by the class struggle and anchored this once again in its program. It states that "the offensive of bourgeois-imperialist reaction" only takes the form of fascism "under special historical conditions". "Such conditions are: the instability of capitalist relations; the presence of socially declassed elements in considerable numbers; the impoverishment of broad layers of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia; the dissatisfaction of the rural petty bourgeoisie; finally, the constant danger of proletarian mass action."⁶⁷ With the formulation of these conditions it was clearly expressed that, in the opinion of the CI, possibilities for the advance of fascism could arise in all capitalist countries.

The program of the Comintern clearly distinguished between fascist rule and fascist movements or tendencies. Less clearly, the Sixth Congress elaborated the differences between the forms of bourgeois class rule and their significance. It discussed the question of whether fascism is a method of oppression or a *form* of class rule by the bourgeoisie. In the draft program, a distinction was made between parliamentarism "as a democratically masked form of bourgeois dictatorship" and fascism "as a method of open dictatorship of the bourgeoisie"⁶⁸. Despite this formulation, this problem was not yet properly recognized at the congress and could not be clarified in the discussions. In the programme of the CI, fascism is primarily described as a method of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie,⁶⁹ while the resolution "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International" also stated that fascism "realizes a new type of state which is openly based on violence and coercion"⁷⁰. Despite some clear elaboration of the fundamental features of fascism as a state power, there was a growing tendency at the Sixth Congress to regard fascism only as a different method of government, but not as a different form of state of bourgeois class rule in relation to the bourgeois parliamentary regimes.⁷¹

On this basis, no sufficient differentiation was made between social democracy and fascism, because fascism and coalition with social democracy were described as methods that the bourgeoisie used in equal measure, depending on the political situation, to maintain its power. Further experiences of struggle were needed in order to attach greater importance to the differentiation between the political forms of rule of capital in the struggle against fascism. Even if many assessments of the VI. Congress must be viewed critically from today's perspective - with regard to the analysis of fascism, the treatment of social democracy, to which fascist tendencies were attributed, which were summarized in later documents under the term "social fascism", it is nevertheless justified to state that the CI, by further revealing the imperialist nature of fascism, gave the right orientation for the direction of the anti-fascist struggle by signaling the danger of fascism even for highly developed capitalist countries. As was retrospectively assessed in the preparatory commissions for the VII Congress, the CI achieved a new quality in the analysis of fascism with the VI Congress by assessing the fascist dictatorship as the rule of monopoly capital.⁷²

The analysis of the Communist International thus differed fundamentally from the views of right-wing social democratic leaders, who considered a fascist development in industrialized countries to be completely out of the question. At around the same time, Kautsky, for example, made the following assessment: "If the fascists are to have a political effect, they must appear in large numbers - in Italy, with a population of 39 million, about half a million. In Germany

⁶⁷ Ibid., vol. IV, p. 57.

⁶⁸ Ibid., vol. II, p. 218. 6

⁶⁹ See *ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 57.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

⁷¹ See Schleifstein, p. 126.

⁷² Centralnyj Partijnyj archiv pri Instituta Marksizma-Leninizma pri CK KPSS, (hereinafter: ZPA/IML Moscow), f. 494, op. 1, ed. 100, I. 3.

To reach this ratio, they would have to be almost a million strong. In an industrial country, such a large number of rags cannot be found in the best years of manhood for capitalist purposes. In Italy, conditions were particularly favorable to fascism."⁷³

[36] The insights gained from the investigation of the role of the monopolies were also reflected at the VI Congress in the fact that the CI elaborated even more sharply and substantiated in greater depth traits of fascism that had already been characterized earlier. Thus, the VI Congress deduced the close connection between war and fascism from the aggressive nature of monopoly and emphasized fascism as the most active element in the preparation of an imperialist war.⁷⁴ In its programme, the CI stated that "the imperialist aggressiveness of foreign policy taken to the extreme" is a characteristic feature of fascism⁷⁵, thus identifying an essential characteristic of fascism, the further analysis of which later led to the realization that it is the most aggressive forces of monopoly capital that are primarily behind fascism.

The assessment of fascism drawn up by the CI at the VI Congress represented a considerable advance in its analysis of fascism, which it had arrived at on the basis of Lenin's theory of imperialism. The programme of the Communist International contained the most far-reaching definition of the class character of fascism to date,⁷⁶ it named concrete historical conditions for the offensive of fascism, identified various methods of fascist demagoguery and corruption, defined the counter-revolutionary function of fascism and, above all, characterized the exercise of fascist power "as the terrorist dictatorship of big capital".⁷⁷

At the VI Congress, the Communist International made significant achievements in analyzing the new economic and political phenomena and development tendencies in imperialism. However, these insights have not yet been translated into strategy and tactics, which is reflected in the existing ambiguities about the interrelation between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism, especially in highly developed capitalist countries.

In its program at this time, the CI set the communist parties in all highly developed capitalist countries the task of the direct struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and justified this with the monopolistic development that was far advanced in these countries.⁷⁸

In view of the increased involvement of social democracy in the ruling apparatus of the monopoly bourgeoisie at this time (e.g. the formation of the Hermann Müller government in Germany) and the minor importance of the fascist movements outside Italy, social reformism appeared to be the main obstacle to the advance of the socialist revolution. The CI therefore failed to foresee that in a few years the rapid upsurge of the fascist movement would make it necessary to pose the question of the interrelation of the struggle for socialism and [37] the struggle for the defense and expansion of democracy in a different way.

After its VI Congress, however, the Communist International had the basic theoretical tools at its disposal in order to be able to make the most of the coming period of intensified class struggles, in which the

⁷³ Karl Kautsky, *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*, Vol. II, Berlin 1929, p. 477; see also Rudolf Hilferding's closing speech at the Kiel SPD party conference, in: *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag 1927 in Kiel. Protokoll mit dem Bericht der Frauenkonferenz*, Berlin 1927, p. 218; see also Helmut Arndt, *Zum Faschismusbild der deutschen Sozialdemokratie (1922-1939). Eine ideengeschichtliche Abhandlung*, phil. Diss., Leipzig 1970.

⁷⁴ See Minutes, Sixth World Congress, Vol. IV, p. 24 f., p. 109; see also Maria Anders/Joachim Kuhles, *Zur Politik der Kommunistischen Internationale gegen den imperialistischen Krieg und für die Erhaltung des Friedens*, in: *Studien zur Geschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Sammelband, Berlin 1974, p. 103 ff.

⁷⁵ Protocol, Sixth World Congress, Vol. IV, p. 58.

⁷⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 57 f.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁷⁸ See The Communist International. *Kurzer historischer Abriss*, p. 334 ff.; D. S. Manuilski, *Die kommunistischen Parteien und die Krise des Kapitalismus*. Report to the XI Plenum of the ECCI, Hamburg 1931, p. 48 f.

As new forms of imperialism emerged more clearly and new experiences were gained in the struggle against fascism, it was possible to penetrate even deeper into its essence and to fully grasp the significance of the differences in the bourgeoisie's forms of rule for the struggle against fascism and for the ultimate goal of the working class.

The statements made at the VI Congress about the development trends in imperialism were confirmed in the following years. The CI allowed itself to be influenced by the assessments of right-wing social democratic leaders and dissenting opinions in its own ranks about a "organized capitalism" did not deviate from their line of systematically and class-wise examining the economic processes in industrialism, from which political development ultimately results, as shown, for example, by the quarterly reports on economics and economic policy written by Eugen Varga, which were regularly published in the journal "Internationale-Presse- Korrespondenz" and after 1933 in the "Rundschau über Politik, Wirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung".

The problems of monopoly formation and the growing interdependence of the state and monopolies also played an important role in these analyses in the following years.⁷⁹ Varga showed that monopoly was increasingly becoming the dominant form of organization in capitalism, which resulted in a corresponding "adaptation of the legal-political superstructure", because "the state power promotes its (the monopoly's - E. L.) emergence, adapts its economic policy to the needs of the monopolies, grows together with the monopolistic organizations".⁸⁰

This recognizable tendency of strong interdependence between monopoly capital and state power provoked different reactions in the international labour movement. In the reformist labour movement, influenced by right-wing social-democratic leaders, it led to the expansion of the theories of "super-imperialism", "organized capitalism" or "ultra-imperialism", according to which competition would be destroyed, the economy would develop according to plan, crises would disappear and internal and external antagonisms would be mitigated, making a peaceful transition to socialism possible.⁸¹

These "theories" were also discussed in the CPSU(B) because they formed "the basis of the whole world view of present-day reformism" and because the appearance of N. I. Bukharin provided a concrete occasion.⁸² Bukharin, who had never completely overcome his views [38] on "pure" imperialism⁸³, according to which it had survived all the characteristic features of capitalism through its development, now arrived at serious deviations from Lenin's theory of imperialism, which were bound to lead to a complete misorientation in the struggle of the working class. The necessary disputes in the CPSU(B) in this context also led to an even more intensive examination of Lenin's views on imperialism and the processes of interdependence between monopolies and the state in the CI. In his analyses, Varga pointed out that in "state capitalism" (here used in the sense of state-monopoly capitalism - E. L.) the task of the state was to protect the interests of the bourgeoisie.

⁷⁹ See Inprekorr, 41/1929, 107/1929; A. Fogarasi, Zur Frage des Staatskapitalismus, in: Die Kommunistische Internationale, 7/1932; K. A., Die Kommunistische Presse in der Tschechoslowakei, in: Ebenda, 8/1932.

⁸⁰ Inprekorr, 41/1929, p. 981; see also 107/1929, p. 2531.

⁸¹ See *ibid.*, 107/1929, p. 2536.

⁸² See *ibid.* p. 2532 - Bukharin wrote in "Pravda" of May 26, 1929: "State capitalism in its complete form means ... The death of competition within the capitalist country and a very strong intensification of competition between the capitalist states" (quoted from Inprekorr, 107/1929, p. 2536); see also M. Joelson, Monopoly Capitalism or "Organized" Capitalism, in: Unter dem Banner des Marxismus, [38] III. vol. 6/1929, p. 807 ff. - On the struggle against right-wing deviation in the CPSU, see History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, vol. IV/I, p. 608 ff.

⁸³ See V. I. Lenin, VIII Party Congress of the CPR(B), March 18-23, 1919, in: Lenin, Werke, Vol. 29, Berlin 1976, p. 150 f.; see also History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Vol. III: The Communist Party - The Organizer of the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the Defense of the Soviet Republic March 1917-1920, Second Book, Moscow 1972, p. 276.

as a class or its decisive strata, whereby it may also have to counter the pursuit of profit by individual capitalists.⁸⁴

The outbreak of the world capitalist economic crisis, which was associated with a deepening of the general crisis of capitalism, confirmed in practice the assessment of the instability of the capitalist system made by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. The crisis from 1929 to 1933 was the longest and deepest of all previous cyclical economic crises of capitalism. It affected all sides of the capitalist economy and led to an extraordinary deterioration in the material and legal situation of the workers and middle classes in the capitalist countries. During the world economic crisis, the imperialist state openly and unscrupulously acted as the guardian of the interests of monopoly capital. With the help of state-monopoly measures, monopoly capital shifted the burden of the crisis onto the working people.⁸⁵

In contrast, a great upswing in socialist construction was initiated in the Soviet Union in those years, and every success of the working people of the Soviet Union in building the new social order objectively weakened the capitalist system in the international class confrontation between capitalism and socialism. The reactionary domestic measures of monopoly capital were accompanied by an intensification of the foreign policy course against the Soviet Union in order to counteract this international development and stabilize the capitalist system by all means.

The global economic crisis led to an intensification of all the contradictions of the capitalist system, especially in Germany. The methods of maneuvering and the means of bourgeois democracy were no longer sufficient to stop the further growth of the class struggle. The most reactionary circles of monopoly capital thought the time had come to tackle the elimination of the bourgeois-democratic form of rule. The fascization of the bourgeois system of rule and the promotion of the fascist party were clear signs of this plan of monopoly capital.

In this period, too, the communist movement proved to be the only organized political force that recognized the causes of the growing fascist danger and took an irreconcilable stand against imperialist reaction.

At the XI meeting of the ECCI from March 26 to April 11, 1931, the CI worked out more clearly than before that monopoly capital was preparing an *offensive* against the workers' movement with fascism. Although the CI had from the beginning judged fascism as an expression of the offensive of imperialist reaction, it was still concluded from the historical defensive position of imperialism that fascism was merely a product of decomposition and a sign of the weakness of capitalism. D. S. Manuilski, who dealt with this thesis at the XI meeting of the ECCI, explained that fascism is one of the forms of capital's offensive, "which carries within itself the elements of the bourgeois crisis. Fascism is both an offensive and a defensive measure of capital",⁸⁶ both an expression of the historical weakness of capital and its temporary strength vis-à-vis the workers' movement.

Once again, the CI dealt with the problem of the different methods of rule of the bourgeoisie, which it was prompted to do above all by developments in Germany, but also by misleading theses of right-wing social democratic leaders about the character of the state. In response to the false thesis that there is a class opposition between bourgeois democracy and fascism, the XIth session of the ECCI opposed the "liberal construction" of such an opposition, because fascism "as the naked form of bourgeois dictatorship ... organically from the so-called bourgeois democracy, as a form of disguised

⁸⁴ Inprekorr, 107/1929, p. 2534 f.

⁸⁵ See Der Imperialismus der BRD, Berlin 1971, p. 44 ff.; Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, vol. 4, Berlin 1966, p. 219 ff.

⁸⁶ Manuilski, p. 115.

Dictatorship of the bourgeoisie"⁸⁷ is growing. Starting from the class character of the bourgeois state, the XI Congress of the ECCI drew the conclusion that it is necessary to fight against every form of bourgeois class rule. However, this orientation led to a certain equation of bourgeois democracy and fascism, to an underestimation of the danger posed by fascist forces and to pre-fascist governments, such as the Brüning government, already being labeled as fascist.⁸⁸ As a result, the communists' always principled practical struggle for the defense of the democratic rights and freedoms of the working class against reaction and fascism could not exhaust all possibilities for involving broad working masses in this struggle.

Although the Comintern repeatedly instructed the communist parties to analyze the respective situation and the measures of the bourgeoisie precisely and not to see in all actions the last desperate acts of the opponent, their own resolutions and those of their sections at this time still reflected an overestimation of the pace of further revolutionary development as well as an underestimation of the forces of the class opponent and its possibilities for asserting its power. Many communists at the time were of the opinion, as Dimitroff retrospectively assessed in 1934, that it was "the last crisis, that the bourgeoisie will not find a [40] way out of this worldwide crisis and that it must in any case end with the victory of the proletarian revolution".⁸⁹

Such a view was particularly prevalent with regard to Germany. But despite the heroic struggle of the KPD and significant sections of the working population, the German working class did not succeed in preventing the victory of fascism, as the unity of action could not be established due to the anti-united front policy of the right-wing SPD leadership. The establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany in January 1933 was a severe blow not only to the German but also to the entire international labor movement. Fascism became a world danger and the greatest threat to peace.

The rise to power of fascism in Germany, a highly developed imperialist industrialized country, placed new, higher demands on the theoretical and practical examination of fascism. A new phase in the analysis of fascism by AI began.

In his regularly published economic reports, Varga had shown that there were differences of opinion between the various groups of the German bourgeoisie about the methods for stabilizing their power. Varga showed that the monopolies of heavy industry in particular were pushing for the establishment of an unrestricted dictatorship, while the monopolistic groups in the consumer goods industry and trade in particular were still hesitant to abandon their previous methods of rule.⁹⁰

As a result of the deepening economic and political crisis and the growing revolutionization of the masses, the most reactionary groups of monopoly capital, which were oriented towards fascist methods, had gained the upper hand. These tried "to find a capitalist way out of the crisis and to fully assert their own special interests through the violent oppression of the proletariat", while those sections of the German bourgeoisie who stood behind the policies of the Centre and Social Democracy were still wavering "whether this violent path of the Junkers and monopoly capital was the right one, the only possible one, whether they should sacrifice their special interests to those of heavy industry and the big agrarians ... should be sacrificed".⁹¹

The KPD played a decisive role in the CI's characterization of the fascist dictatorship in Germany. In a report by the Central Committee of the KPD on the assessment of the development

⁸⁷ Eleventh Plenum of the ECCI (April 1931), Theses and Resolutions, Hamburg/Berlin 1931, p. 10.

⁸⁸ Manuïlski, p. 122 f.; see also Die Kommunistische Internationale. Brief Historical Outline, p. 379.

⁸⁹ ZPA/IML Moscow, f. 494, op. 1, ed. 423. 1. 13.

⁹⁰ See Varga, Wirtschaft und Wirtschaftspolitik im 2. Vierteljahr 1932, in: Inprekorr, 65/1932, p. 2086; G. Reimann, Die deutsche Schwerindustrie in den Fesseln der Krise und des Versailler Systems, in: Die Kommunistische Internationale, 12/1932, p. 888 ff.; Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung vol. 4, p. 227 ff.

⁹¹ Varga, Economy and Economic Policy in the 2nd Quarter of 1932, p. 2086; see also Suchopár, p. 217 f.

in Germany it says: "In July (1933), when the concentration of state power in the hands of the NSDAP was complete, fascism had to visibly lift its anti-capitalist veil and show on whose behalf the fascist blood dictatorship was being exercised: the true rulers of Germany intervened - the 'General Council of the Economy' stepped onto the political stage ... and provided proof of the correctness of our statement: *fascism is the brutal, bloody dictatorship of the monopoly capitalists*."⁹²

[41] These investigations and findings flowed into the deliberations of the XIIIth session of the ECCI from 28 November to 12 December 1933, which dealt above all with questions of the proletarian class struggle since the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany, whereby it regarded the most precise possible determination of the class character of fascism as the most important precondition for the organization of the anti-fascist struggle.

In his presentation, Wilhelm Pieck took up the KPD's investigation and, based on the development of the fascist Hitler dictatorship to date, was able to state: "The class content of the fascist dictatorship in Germany is demonstrated by the composition of the 'General Council of the Economy'." He pointed out that of the 16 members⁹³, nine were major industrialists (almost exclusively representatives of monopoly capital), four were bank princes and two were major agriculturalists.⁹⁴

At the same time, the Hitler government passed a law on the establishment of compulsory cartels, according to which the previously non-cartelized industry was merged "in order to make it even more dependent on monopoly capital and the big banks", as the plebiscite put it.⁹⁵

These observations on the development in Germany showed that under the conditions of the fascist dictatorship the unification of the power of the monopolies with the power of the state progressed significantly and that the state apparatus was subordinated to the rule of the most reactionary and aggressive groups of finance capital.

In the theses "Fascism, the Danger of War and the Tasks of the Communist Parties", the XIIIth session of the ECCI characterized fascism, generalizing the new experiences and findings, as "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinist and imperialist elements of finance capital".⁹⁶ This definition was based on the previous findings of the CI and at the same time was significantly more precise in that it defined the most reactionary and aggressive elements of finance capital as the *social* carriers of fascism, who exercise their *political* rule in the form of an open terrorist dictatorship. At the same time, she expressed the fact that the concentration of power in the economic sphere is also reflected in the concentration of political power.

Significant progress in the clarification of the connection between imperialist economics and fascist politics by the CI was also evident in the more precise determination of the historical place of fascism. At the VI Congress, the question of whether fascism was a legitimate stage in highly developed imperialist countries had played a role in the [42] discussion of the program. In the program of the CI this question was answered in the negative in such a way that the

⁹² IML/ZPA, 3/1/2430; see also G. Reimann, Das Hervortreten des Finanzkapitals unter der faschistischen Diktatur in: Die Kommunistische Internationale, 15/1933, p. 722 ff; Walter Ulbricht, Der faschistische deutsche Imperialismus (1933-1945). (The Legend of "German Socialism"), Berlin 1952, p. 13 ff.

⁹³ The total number of members was 17, as stated in later accounts (see Ulbricht, p. 65; Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, vol. 5, Berlin 1966, p. 57).

⁹⁴ XIII Plenum of the ECCI/December 1933: Wilhelm Pieck, Wir kämpfen für ein Rätedeutschland. The revolutionary struggle of the German working class under the leadership of the Communist Party of Germany against the fascist dictatorship, Report on the activities of the Communist Party of Germany, Moscow/Leningrad 1934, p. 23.

⁹⁵ Ibid.; see also Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, vol. 5, p. 57.

⁹⁶ XIII Plenum of the ECCI: Theses and Resolutions, Moscow/Leningrad 1934, p. 5; on this problem, see also Elfriede Lewerenz, Die Analyse des Faschismus durch die Kommunistische Internationale. Die Aufdeckung von Wesen und Funktion des Faschismus während der Vorbereitung und Durchführung des VII. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale (1933-1935), Berlin 1975.

The ECCI has now explicitly emphasized that "the fascist dictatorship is not an inevitable stage of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in all countries". In the theses of the XIIIth session of the ECCI, the CI now expressly emphasized that "the fascist dictatorship is not an inevitable stage of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in all countries", but that the possibility of averting it depends above all on the forces of the fighting proletariat.⁹⁷

Despite the precise assessment of the class character of fascism, its function and its place given by the XIIIth session of the ECCI, it was still evident in the preparations for the

At the Seventh Congress in 1934/35, the CI realized that the analysis of processes under imperialism was one of the most complicated questions and that the exhaustion of the entire wealth of Lenin's theory of imperialism created the prerequisite for drawing the correct conclusions for the strategy and tactics of the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist struggle. To this end, the CI analyzed both the studies on the fascist dictatorship in Germany⁹⁸ and the latest experiences from the confrontations of the working class in France and Austria with fascism. The events in France in particular had helped to deepen the CI's understanding of the importance of bourgeois democracy in the direct confrontation with fascism. The attack by fascism in France in February 1934 was repulsed primarily through the actions of the united working class; but it was also very important for the success that, under the leadership of the working class, broad sections of the people opposed fascism with the aim of defending and preserving the bourgeois parliamentary republic.⁹⁹ During the preparations for the VII Congress, the CI drew important conclusions from this for a more precise characterization of the fascist form of rule and, above all, for the strategy and tactics of the anti-fascist struggle.

During the preparations for the congress, leading functionaries of the CI repeatedly dealt with the processes in the economics of imperialism. Palme Dutt, for example, in his works, especially in his articles written in preparation for the VII Congress

"On Some Problems of Fascism", again raised questions about the socio-economic basis of fascism. Agreeing in principle with the definition given by the XIIIth Congress of the ECCI, he demanded that the VIIth Congress of the CI "deepen the analysis of the economic basis of fascism"¹⁰⁰. He justified his demand by stating that "during the first wave of fascism, which preceded the partial stabilization of capitalism, ... the weapon of fascism was only used under certain specific circumstances to suppress and crush the class struggles of the proletariat"; since the world economic crisis, however, the situation had changed. This

"second wave of fascism" reflected "a far-reaching change in the economic basis".¹⁰¹ In his opinion, this was the basis [43] for the "new economic measures to intensify the trade war ... the addiction to 'leveling' the national economy".¹⁰²

In the discussion of the draft theses on the first item on the agenda of the VII World Congress, which was conducted in the preparatory commission, the leading functionaries of the CI also and once again dealt with the changes in the economic basis of the capitalist system. They stated: "This growth of monopolism, which is leading to the formation of a kind of ultra-monopoly in a number of the largest imperialist countries, implies the direct and indirect subordination of the bourgeois state, its political and economic means of influencing the economy, its material and financial resources to the dictatorship of the vast associations of finance capital."¹⁰³ This document also emphasized that

⁹⁷ XIII Plenary Session of the ECCI: Theses and resolutions p. 6.

⁹⁸ See Lewerenz, p. 74 ff., p. 97 ff.

⁹⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 112 ff.

¹⁰⁰ R. P. Dutt, Über einige Probleme des Faschismus, in: Die Kommunistische Internationale, 11/1935, p. 877; see also the same, Faschismus und soziale Revolution, Frankfurt a. M. 1972.

¹⁰¹ Derselbe, Über einige Probleme des Faschismus, p. 877.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 878.

¹⁰³ ZPA/IML Moscow, f. 494, op. 1, ed. 3, l. 12.

*"the growth and spread of monopolism ... does not lead to the organization and planning of capitalism, but to the intensification of competition".*¹⁰⁴

In the discussion on this draft thesis, Varga and V. G. Knorin objected to the term "supermonopoly" or "ultramonomopoly". It is clear, said Varga, that the formation of monopolies has increased considerably in the last six years.

"Over-monopoly", but that the accelerated formation of monopolies is the basic tendency of imperialism.¹⁰⁵ *"What is new* (emphasis mine - E. L.) *are the laws and regulations in Germany, Japan, Poland, Italy, in a certain sense also in France and America, which not only encourage the formation of monopoly, but introduce it by force, that all these measures are approaching a state which Lenin calls war-monopoly capitalism."*¹⁰⁶ Some functionaries of the CI were not in favour of emphasizing these state-monopoly tendencies because, in their opinion, of the theses of the Sixth Congress, those on "state capitalism" had proved the least successful. They had interpreted these theses as expressing the idea of the subordination of capitalists, "small, large and great", to the state apparatus.¹⁰⁷ Of course, the actual processes in practice did not correspond to such ideas of "state capitalism"; on the contrary, it had to be emphasized with the utmost determination that in Germany, for example, there was no "subordination of Thyssen and others to state power", but rather the opposite.¹⁰⁸ Varga expressed the novelty, the mutual interdependence of monopolies and the state, with the following words: "They (the capitalists - E. L.) cannot do business in Germany without the decision of the state bureaucracy

... but the state bureaucracy can do nothing without them."¹⁰⁹ These discussions clearly show how intensively the CI dealt with the processes in the imperialist camp during the preparations for the VII Congress, above all with the changes in the field of the economy and politics of imperialism.

[44] At the time, the CI saw the problems in such a way that, especially since the world economic crisis, the formation of monopolies and their connection with the state apparatus had increased sharply, while at the same time this development was accompanied by the growing fascist danger. Given the degree of development of state-monopoly capitalism at the time and the simultaneous fascist offensive in several countries, it was reasonable to assume that fascism emerged from a change in the economic basis of imperialism or that state-monopoly development was synonymous with the development of fascism. These considerations gave rise to such interpretations of Roosevelt's policies as that of Dutt, who writes: "While all the social-reformist 'progressive' trappings of the 'New Deal' are so rapidly disappearing, the reality of the new fascist type of concentrated state capitalism and industrial servitude remains." In his opinion, the significance of Roosevelt's regime lay above all in the "transition to fascist forms, especially in the economic and industrial field",¹¹⁰ i.e. Dutt assessed the state-monopoly regulatory measures in the area of industry and the economy as fascist per se and the bourgeois-democratic form of rule as merely a "camouflage". Varga also initially regarded the "New Deal" as "disguised fascist demagoguery".¹¹¹

The "Lessons on Fascism" given by Togliatti in preparation for the VII Congress of the CI, especially his remarks on the various sides of corporativism, certainly helped to clarify this problem.¹¹² Particularly interesting are his studies on the

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, I. 125.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 118 f.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 209.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, I. 210.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, I. 209 f.

¹¹⁰ Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution*, p. 248 f.

¹¹¹ See Goldberg, p. 98 ff.

¹¹² See Togliatti, p. 106 ff.

Corporative system as an organizational form of Italian fascism at the beginning of the 1930s, "according to which the fascists sought to organize Italian society and in particular certain areas of state activity".¹¹³ Togliatti proved that the corporative system did not represent a new economic system, as claimed by fascist propaganda, but that it was a policy "which favored the concentration of capital, a policy which led to the domination of finance capital in the economy of the whole country"; it represented one of the ways "to give concrete form to the capitalist attempt at so-called 'planning'".¹¹⁴ Togliatti mentioned the activities of state-monopoly regulation in other countries, which, however, "could not be described as fascist". This was "true of the Roosevelt government, for example".¹¹⁵ He thus drew attention to the fact that there were different forms of state-monopoly regulation, fascist and non-fascist.

The discussions held in the CI press and in the preparatory commissions for the VII Congress testify to the CI's ability to uncover essential aspects of the connection between ecology and politics in state-monopoly capitalism. Misjudgements in the differentiated evaluation of the various forms of rule by monopoly capital in the individual countries were overcome in the further process of discovery.

[45] Progress in this area was clearly expressed in the deliberations and resolutions of the VII Congress of the CI from July 25 to August 20, 1935. The VII Congress gave an all-round analysis of fascism.¹¹⁶

The characterization of fascism made by the XIII Congress of the ECCI could also be confirmed after the thorough discussions during the preparations for the congress. Dimitroff therefore stated at the VII Congress: "Fascism in power, comrades, is as the
"Fascism in power", as the ECCI correctly characterized at its XIII Plenum, "is the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist, most imperialist elements of finance capital."¹¹⁷ With the explicit characterization of fascism *in power*, the CI lent even greater clarity to its previous assessment, as it thus distinguished the fascist state power from the fascist mass base, which was predominantly recruited from petty-bourgeois circles.

It is clear from the discussions in the commissions preparing the congress that the CI, in its scientific analysis of fascism, also took into account the concrete particularities of fascism in different countries. Its analysis was not limited to the formulation of the most reactionary elements of finance capital - as imperialist ideologues incessantly accuse it of doing - but conscientiously examined the different forms of fascization and fascist dictatorships. Already in the "First Draft of the Theses" on the first item on the agenda of the VII Congress on August 20, 1934, it was stated that August 1934: "The particularities of the economic, social and national structure of the individual countries and their historical development determine the peculiarities of their fascization process, the various forms and methods of fascism and the fascist dictatorship: the total dictatorship (Germany, Italy), the fascist military dictatorship (Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Japan), clerico-fascism (Austria, Spain), the maintenance of a certain semblance of parliamentarism (Poland, Hungary, Finland), etc..., *without changing anything in the class nature of the fascist dictatorship* (emphasis mine - E. L.), these differences are also reflected in the degree of restriction of the role of the

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 106.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 107; see also the review by K. K. Širinja, *Kommunisty - samy rešitel'nye i posledovatel'nye borcy protiv fašizma*, in: *Kommunist*, 15/1974, p. 126.

¹¹⁶ See Lejbzon/Širinja, p. 160 ff.; see also Lewerenz, p. 120 ff.; K. K. Schirinja/H. Schumacher, *Methodological Aspects in the Work of the VII Congress of the Communist International*, in: *BzG*, 4/1975.

¹¹⁷ Georgi Dimitroff, *The Offensive of Fascism and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle for the Unity of the Working Class against Fascism*. August 2, 1935, in: *VII Congress of the Communist International. Referate und Resolutionen*, Berlin 1975, p. 93; see also the resolution on Georgi Dimitroff's report, in: *ibid*, p. 304.

Social Democracy is expressed in the degree of liquidation of the reformist trade unions with the subsequent possible use and exploitation of their individual groups."¹¹⁸ The CI seriously examined the arguments and opinions of its members and dealt with them. The great achievement of the CI was precisely to have recognized the imperialist class character of fascism from the outset and to identify the essential, the universally valid, from the increasing diversity of phenomena and to define it ever more concretely.

The exact assessment of German fascism was still the subject of an exchange of opinions in the editorial commission when the resolution on Dimitroff's speech was revised. During the formulation of this paragraph there was still a discussion about [46] whether one should say that National Socialism is the power of finance capital itself or whether it "*merely* plays the role of a pawn of the big bourgeoisie". Dimitroff declared that fascism is an "instrument of finance capital". Wilhelm Pieck and Wilhelm Florin, who pointed to a certain independence of fascist power, considered it expedient to formulate that the fascist ruling clique was in a subordinate position to monopoly capital. It was decided to retain the formulation that fascism "merely plays the role of a lackey of the big bourgeoisie".¹¹⁹ The VII Congress thus emphasized that the ruling reactionary circles of the monopoly bourgeoisie and the ruling fascist groups are not completely identical in terms of personnel, that the fascist leadership clique is the executor of the interests of finance capital.

In its characterization of the nature of fascism, the CI concentrated on its fundamental class features: the imperialist socio-economic basis and the political form of rule by the most reactionary circles of finance capital. The following assessment in Dimitroff's speech was very significant: "The rise to power of fascism is not the simple replacement of one bourgeois government by another, but the replacement of one form of state of the class rule of the bourgeoisie, bourgeois democracy, by another, by the open terrorist dictatorship."¹²⁰

The CI thus clearly established that the fascist dictatorship was not only a method of rule of the bourgeoisie, but a new form of state of the class dictatorship of monopoly capital. The clarification of this question, which had been discussed since the Sixth Congress, was of great importance for the correct orientation of the struggle against fascism, as it helped to understand that, as Dimitroff explained, "at present ... the working masses in a number of capitalist countries have to choose concretely for today not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism".¹²¹ With this precise assessment, the CI removed all ground from the equation of bourgeois democracy with fascist dictatorship.

Lenin's statement that the rule of monopoly in the political sphere means "reaction all along the line, no matter under what political system"¹²² had been confirmed to the effect that, over and above the tendency to dismantle democracy in the bourgeois parliamentary form of government, the most reactionary elements of finance capital still found opportunities to establish an extremely reactionary and terrorist dictatorship, a new form of state for the exercise of their power. The Comintern drew the conclusion that even in highly developed capitalist countries, communists must go beyond the defense of democratic rights and freedoms in the fight against fascism. Equipped with new insights into the relationship between economics and politics under the conditions of state-monopoly capitalism and fascism, the CI was able to concretize [47] and further develop Lenin's doctrine of the interdependence of the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism by developing a

¹¹⁸ ZPA/IML Moscow, f. 495, op. 1, ed. 3, 1. 16.

¹¹⁹ See *ibid.*, f. 494, op. 1, ed. 423, 1.21, 23; see also the resolution on Georgi Dimitroff's report, p. 305.

¹²⁰ Dimitroff, *The Offensive of Fascism*, p. 94.

¹²¹ The same, *For the unity of the working class against fascism*. Closing speech at the VII World Congress of the Communist International. August 13, 1935, in: Dimitroff, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. 2, Berlin 1958, p. 645.

¹²² Lenin, *Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, in: *Werke*, Vol. 22, p. 302.

The next strategic stage of the struggle for an anti-fascist and anti-imperialist democracy was developed as a unified concept.¹²³

At its VII Congress, the CI answered all questions concerning fascism in context. It was the only political force that had recognized its essence and developed the corresponding strategy and tactics of the anti-fascist struggle. This was a significant achievement for the struggle of the international workers' movement. However, the VII Congress immediately drew attention to the fact that it is the task of communists to continue to follow the development of fascism very closely. In his speech, Dimitroff emphasized that the development of fascism and the fascist dictatorship "take different forms in different countries", depending on "the historical, social and economic conditions ... the national characteristics and the international position of the country concerned".¹²⁴ He took up this idea again in his concluding remarks and declared: "No general characterization of fascism, however correct it may be in itself, relieves us of the duty to study and consider in concrete terms the nature of the development of fascism and the various forms of fascist dictatorship in individual countries and at different stages."¹²⁵ He warned against the use of a schema to characterize the processes in the various capitalist countries. He described existing views on Roosevelt's "New Deal", according to which it represented a particularly sharp form of fascism, as a "remnant of a schematic position" on fascism.¹²⁶ Dimitroff also drew attention to the need to examine the peculiarities that fascism would take on in colonial and dependent countries.¹²⁷

It is essential for the organization of a successful anti-fascist struggle to take into account national characteristics and the differences in the manifestations of fascism in the individual countries. However, finding these out presupposes knowledge of its essence. Therefore, the determination of the imperialist class character of fascism by the CI at the beginning of the 1920s and, above all, the all-round analysis of its nature at the Seventh Congress is not only a historical achievement of the Communist International, but also provides the key for the study of fascism in the present.¹²⁸

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¹²³ See The Communist International. Kurzer historischer Abriß, p. 457 ff.; Lejbzon/Širinja, p. 200 ff.; Erwin Lewin/Horst Schumacher, Einheit im Kampf gegen Faschismus und Krieg! The VII Congress of the Communist International 1935, Berlin 1975.

¹²⁴ Dimitroff, The Offensive of Fascism, p. 94.

¹²⁵ Same, For the Unity of the Working Class against Fascism, p. 629.

¹²⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 632 f.

¹²⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 633; see also Lejbzon/Širinja, p. 174 ff.

¹²⁸ See Contemporary Fascism and the Reality of its Danger. International discussion by Marxists, in: Problems of Peace and Socialism, 4/1973, 5/1973; see also J. Barrios/L. Padilla/K. Maidanik, Genesis and Characteristics of Fascism in Latin America, in: Ebenda, 4/1978, p. 535 ff.

Dietrich Eichholtz: Fascism and Economics. On problems of the development of production relations under the fascist dictatorship

Fascism as a counter-revolutionary, extremely aggressive political current, party and ideology represents a part of the political superstructure and social forms of consciousness of imperialist society in the age of the general crisis of capitalism. The politics and ideology of fascism grow out of the economic basis characterized by the rule of finance capital, which, by virtue of its inherent laws, always reproduces the tendency to extreme political reaction, violence and terror. In the fascist dictatorship, this tendency becomes the ruling tendency, the state becomes the "open terrorist dictatorship of the most re- actionist, most chauvinist, most imperialist elements of finance capital"¹ ' the fascist ideology becomes the ruling variety of bourgeois ideology.

The dialectic between the base and the superstructure exhibits a double connection and a reciprocal effect here as everywhere else. Processes operating in the depths of the relations of production trigger changes in class relations, political processes, class struggles; the big bourgeoisie gears its political apparatus of power and its production of ideas to this. Their apparatus of power and the ruling ideology, in turn, work in the intended direction according to the political leeway they have and according to their endowment with material and personal potential: they consolidate and expand the rule of monopoly capital. This effect will be examined in the following sections using the example of German fascism.

A lack of understanding and denial of the connection outlined above characterize not only the typical proponents of the "totalitarianism" theory, but also authors who distance themselves from the crude games of this theory. Eike Hennig, for example, postulates the "non-identity" of "social rule" and "political power" for German fascism, but also for fascism in general, and against "dogmatizing" historical materialism in general.² But only those who misunderstand the concept of identity can accuse Marxism of regarding the basis and superstructure, economy and politics as abstractly identical. If, on the other hand, identity is understood as the contradictory unity of different sides of a process, then ecology and politics, base and superstructure do, however, bear the character of such a unity. The fact that "politics is the most concentrated expression of economics" applies very precisely to fascism and especially to the fascist dictatorship as an extreme, yet perfectly adequate form of political superstructure over the "social rule" of finance capital.³

The transition of the big bourgeoisie to a fascist dictatorship does not mean a simple change of government, but a fundamental change in the forms and methods of exercising power.⁴ Nowhere do the primary or even sole causes for the establishment of fascist dictatorships lie in the economic conditions of an economic crisis, in concepts of the arms industry or in the "modernization" needs of the big bourgeoisie. They always lie in the immediate political needs of the ruling class. Fascism is a weapon in the class struggle of the large national and international exploiters against the working class and all other classes and strata of the people, sometimes also against larger sections of the bourgeoisie.

The factors that gave rise to and promoted fascism form a diverse and complex network of social conditions and contradictions. Historically and specifically nationally determined contradictions of a political, economic and ideological nature form a knot that the big bourgeoisie tries to break with the help of the fascist dictatorship.

¹ Georgi Dimitroff, The Offensive of Fascism and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle for the Unity of the Working Class against Fascism, August 2, 1935, in: VII World Congress of the Communist International, Berlin 1975, p. 93.

² Eike Hennig, Theses on German Social and Economic History 1933 to 1938, Frankfurt a. M. 1973, p. 126 f.

³ V. I. Lenin, On the Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky, in: Lenin, Werke, Vol. 32, Berlin 1961, p. 15.

⁴ Class struggle, tradition, socialism. From the beginnings of the history of the German people to the shaping of the developed socialist society in the German Democratic Republic. Grundriß, Berlin 1974, p. 443.

tries. However, the efficiency of this dictatorship - as well as that of other regimes - is ultimately judged by the decisive criteria of the development of production relations: Consolidation or restoration of the rule of capital, primarily monopoly capital; maximum subjugation of the working class under a regime of undisturbed exploitation; expansion of imperialist economic power outwards. It is the most reactionary and aggressive circles of finance capital that expect the most resounding successes from a fascist dictatorship on precisely these points.

An economic explanation of fascism, as found in Alfred Sohn-Rethel, who advocates a kind of collapse theory, does not seem correct to me. According to him, the fascist dictatorship in Germany established itself as the inevitable result of insurmountable reproduction and exploitation difficulties of an "economic terminal crisis of capitalism"⁵, to which the development of the productive forces under the rule of the monopolies had led. There were only two ways out of this crisis: the proletarian revolution or the fascist dictatorship. He defines the fascist dictatorship as a "transformation from an economy of reproduction to an economy of destruction" or an "economy of bankruptcy".⁶ For the latter, the old economic laws of capitalism no longer applied, but rather the "opposite rules" and "reversed laws".⁷ For Sohn-Rethel, there is a special "fascist system of [51] deficit profit capitalism", which he misleadingly defines as "the fascist system of absolute surplus value production (enforced by terror - D.E.)", characterized by the fact that "the end product that is produced must not return to the inner market".⁸

His theory of a "fascist economy" is based in part on correctly observed elements and developmental tendencies of the economy of developed capitalism (tendency for the rate of profit to fall), in particular the general crisis of capitalism (underutilization of capacity) and state-monopoly capitalism (regulatory state intervention in the reproduction process). Some of the characteristics of this economy usually experience an extreme manifestation through the political stimulus of a fascist dictatorship (extra-economic coercion in the economy, armament economy, expansionism and open aggressiveness of finance capital). However, historical experience shows beyond doubt that imperialism, as capitalism in the rotting stage, suffers permanently and incurably from the aforementioned defects, no matter under what political auspices.

Whether fascism wins or not is a question of class struggle and not economics. History also bears witness to this, for example in France in the 1930s and in Germany at the time of the Kapp Putsch in 1920, or, conversely, in the last months of the Weimar Republic, when the great economic crisis was already clearly subsiding, and not least in Chile in the 1970s. The working class and other democratic forces are misguided if only the proletarian revolution is recognized as an alternative to fascism. In general, a one-sided economic approach leads to political fatalism or utopianism.

The fascist dictatorship, once in the saddle, subjects itself to the fulfillment of the class-related tasks already mentioned. It cruelly suppresses and persecutes the revolutionary workers' movement and all other democratic forces and currents. It subjects the working class to a perfected state-monopoly system of exploitation. It stirs up international tensions and conflicts and prepares for war. In the end, its entire activity, under whatever radical political forms and in whatever bizarre ideological disguise, is always directed towards one goal: the stimulation of profit production and the strengthening of the power positions of finance capital.

⁵ Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Ökonomie und Klassenstruktur des deutschen Faschismus. Aufzeichnungen und Analysen*, ed. and in. by Johannes Agnoli, Bernhard Blanke and Niels Kadritzke, Frankfurt a. M. 1973, p. 182.

⁶ Ibid., p. 68, p. 199.

⁷ Ibid., p. 116, p. 185.

⁸ Ibid., p. 118, p. 123.

Now it is the particular forms of political rule - open terror, the concentration of political power in the hands of a small fascist clique - and the often anti-capitalist draped ideology and demagoguery that characterize the regime as specifically fascist. However, concrete historical research shows that it is precisely fascist terror and the concentration of state-monopoly regulatory power that in many respects create "ideal" conditions of rule and exploitation for the big bourgeoisie, albeit at the cost of an unprecedented intensification of social and class antagonisms and growing internal lability of the regime.

It is also worth examining the extent to which certain elements of fascist ideology and demagoguery cater to the immediate profit needs of the exploiting class; in Germany, for example, the "Führerprinzip" (dictatorial power of the "Be-[52]triebsführer" over the "Be-[52]triebsführer"), the "allegiance"), racism (justification of the forced labor of foreign peoples), the "national community" and pseudo-socialism ("work ennobles"; "increased performance"; "battle for production"), chauvinism (armaments profits; increasing labor intensity in the arms industry). However, the role of fascist ideology as the handmaiden of the economy should not be schematized and overestimated. First and foremost, it has to perform functions that correspond to the fundamental *political* interests of the exploiting class and not directly to its economic interests: to fight Marxism, to deceive the working people about their class situation and distract them from the class struggle, to inculcate chauvinism, racial and ethnic hatred, to glorify war and colonialism.

The fact that various elements of fascist politics and ideology only correspond in a mediated way to the fundamental interests and profit needs of finance capital, that they also partly exhibit a utopian extremism due to the insolubility of the tasks set (conquest of world domination; liquidation of the class struggle and socialism) and testify to adventurism and political vabanque, serves numerous bourgeois authors as evidence of a mismatch between fascist politics and capitalist economics. For example, Timothy W. Mason claims with regard to German fascism,

"that the domestic and foreign policy of the National Socialist state leadership from 1936 onwards became increasingly independent of the determination of the economically ruling classes, and even ran counter to their interests in essential points".⁹ According to him, Hitler's policy "lacked even an indirect connection to the needs of social reproduction".¹⁰ According to Mason, the policy of expansion and world conquest in particular was "demonstrably not an adequate superstructure"; for "its legacy consisted of ruins and ashes - and a ... the continuing defeat of independent German imperialism". Instead, "a more cautious policy would have served imperialist interests better in both the long and short term".

In contrast, Kurt Gossweiler rightly pointed out that the war aims of German imperialism as well as the character of its warfare and ultimately its defeat were entirely in keeping with its nature; the nature of an imperialism "which feels itself to be an economic giant but politically disadvantaged and whose extreme greed for conquest and plunder is coupled with a notorious inability to realistically assess the balance of power".¹¹

So what is the mechanism by which the interests and aspirations of monopoly capitalism assert themselves through domestic policy, foreign policy and military strategy and warfare? This is a particularly important field of investigation. Marxist research places this problem in the broader context of state-monopoly capitalism. By state-monopoly capitalism, we mean the functional mechanism of imperialist exploitation and domination, which is characterized by the intensification of contradictions in the

⁹ Tim Mason, Der Primat der Politik - Politik und Wirtschaft im Nationalsozialismus, in: Das Argument, 41/1966, p. 474.

¹⁰ Derselbe, Primat der Industrie? - Eine Erwiderung, in: Das Argument, 47/1968, p. 196 f. - Hereafter also the following.

¹¹ Kurt Gossweiler, Über Wesen und Funktion des Faschismus, in: Gossweiler/Kühnl/Opitz, Faschismus. Emergence and Prevention. Material zur Faschismus-Diskussion, Frankfurt a. M. 1972, p. 19.

imperialism is brought into [53] life; that system of structures and methods of rule which is supposed to "dampen" the contradictions of highly socialized capitalist production, the contradictions in the relations of production and the class struggle of the oppressed and exploited, and which the ruling monopoly bourgeoisie is increasingly expanding as a form of organization of its economic and political power.

This system, in which monopoly power and state power unite and grow together, their functions merge, remains essentially the same under the fascist dictatorship as in other bourgeois regimes. Helga Nussbaum has worked out the main objective of state-monopoly capitalism:

1. the regulation of the material expanded reproduction of capital under the conditions of the imperialist stage, as which are to be understood:

a) enormous growth in social productive power with a simultaneous weakening of the old self-regulating mechanisms of capitalist production,

b) Increasing expansion drive of the huge monopolistic capital associations and thus both global economic interdependence and global economic and political conflicts;

2. Securing the extended reproduction of the capital relation under conditions that continually threaten to burst the capital shell of the social means of production; consolidation of private capitalist property and regulation of class relations;

3. Maintaining the political power of the capitalist oligarchies under the revolutionary pressure of the imperialist epoch, this world-historical period of transition from capitalism to socialism, in which, since the existence of the socialist camp, the 'external' influences on the monopoly capitalist system have gained additional and ever-increasing weight."¹²

However, the structure, dynamics, manifestations and appearance of state-monopoly capitalism changed considerably under the fascist dictatorship. German fascism was characterized by "a rapid increase in the role of the state and the broadest application of measures for state-monopoly regulation".¹³ In general, under fascism, the state-monopoly power of regulation was used in a more concentrated and comprehensive way against the working people and often also against weaker sections of the exploiting classes. This corresponds to the accelerated expansion of the power positions of finance capital and its more comprehensive "total" objectives in the economic, political and ideological spheres. In the case of war preparation and war, this tendency is intensified.

In fascism, the state-monopoly mechanism of rule is handled with open brutality, with the concentrated use of the repressive power of the dictatorship. The state-organized terror not only suffocates every form of democratic control and political resistance; it becomes a main method of enforcing the class goals of monopoly capital in the economic, political and ideological fields, especially in the labour market, in the organization of work in companies and in mass manipulation.

As a rule, parts of the previous institutional apparatus are subject to change. [54] Political leadership strata, state organs and state-monopoly institutions are replaced by others; more radical new bodies and organizations are created. Hand in hand with this, state-monopoly groupings¹⁴ are re-forming. The fascist leadership clique and the

¹² Helga Nussbaum, Zur Diskussion um den historischen Platz des staatsmonopolistischen Kapitalismus in der neueren marxistisch-leninistischen Literatur, in: JfW, 1976/I, p. 92 f.

¹³ A. A. Galkin, Germanskij fašizm, Moscow 1967, p. 56 f.

¹⁴ "State-monopoly groupings are social and institutional complexes in which parts of the state or (and) the fascist party apparatus and parts of financial capital, e.g. financial groups or monopoly groups, are particularly closely intertwined for the purpose of implementing a certain economic or (and) political conception and corresponding economic and political decisions and measures. Such groups are

Fascist party as a "state party" bring their political power and clout to the union of monopoly power and state power.

All those bourgeois authors who fight the Marxist theory of state-monopoly capitalism draw arguments from the changes described above. Among the advocates of the "totalitarianism" theory still categorizes the economy under fascism as a state "coercive" or "command economy", as a "centrally controlled" or "centrally administered economy", in which private property and "free enterprise" had been suppressed and its initiative stifled. An essential function of this theory - in addition to its exculpatory function - is to equate the economy under fascism and fascism in general with socialism and the socialist planned economy, regardless of scientific purity, and to praise the "free market economy", the "free basic order" and the "community of the free world" in relation to both.

In contrast, since the mid-1960s, a direction has come to the fore that focuses more on the undeniable historical and sociological facts and attempts to bring them into line with the current political and ideological needs of the ruling imperialist circles. The juxtaposition of "totalitarian forced economy" and

The "free market economy" view is difficult to uphold, even in the face of Marxist research findings, and the longer it persists, the less effective it is in the face of the difficulties and disasters of imperialism, its defeats in the confrontation with socialism and the increasing state-monopoly interventions in the economy and politics. Representatives of this view, for example Arthur Schweitzer, generally recognize the continued existence of big capital and private ownership of the means of production under fascism, but they deny the continued existence or at least the continued functioning of the capitalist economic system.¹⁵

[55] Sohn-Rethel's doctrine of the fascist state, which saves capitalism by transforming its economy into a "business cycle according to the reverse law of economic competition"¹⁶, and of the fascist party, which is apostrophized as the "servant of the bourgeoisie", which is apostrophized as the "servant of the bourgeoisie", "but only in the sense that it sits in the saddle above its bourgeoisie and rides its own course with spurs and curb reins"¹⁷ - although neither of them seems to know quite where this course is supposed to lead; a doctrine that Hennig describes as "position based on Bonapartism theory"¹⁸ welcomed.

In the following, property relations and conditions of exploitation in Germany are examined as examples of how the fascist dictatorship brought about the "securing of the extended reproduction of the capital relation" (Nussbaum); how the state-monopoly mechanism of rule was handled in its particular fascist form in order to turn Germany into a fascist penitentiary for the workers and a paradise for big capital. From

These groups are necessarily more volatile than financial and monopoly groups, as their emergence and development depends and is determined not only by economic interests, but also by political goals and ideas and by changes in the political balance of power. The military-industrial complex is a state-monopoly grouping with a dominant influence in today's imperialist countries. During the fascist dictatorship in Germany, the most influential state-monopoly groupings were those around Schacht and Thyssen, the four-year plan grouping around Göring and the IG Farben group and the grouping around the Reich Ministry of Armaments and Munitions (Speer); the latter increasingly united all the important sub-groups of finance capital in the course of the war. See also *Dietrich Eichholtz*, *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939-1945*, vol. 1, Berlin 1971, p. 9.

¹⁵ See derselbe, *Alte und "neue" Konzeptionen*. Bourgeois literature on the economic history of fascism in Germany, in: *JfW*, 1971/III, p. 231 ff.

¹⁶ Sohn-Rethel, p. 173.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 177.

¹⁸ Eike Hennig, *Industrie, Aufrüstung und Kriegsvorbereitung im deutschen Faschismus*. Anmerkungen zum Stand der neueren Faschismuskritik, in: *Wirtschaft und Rüstung am Vorabend des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, ed. by Friedrich Forstmeier and Hans-Erich Volkmann, Düsseldorf 1975, p. 406.

Conditions of exploitation and property relations - these are the two essential sides of production relations, the two fundamental categories of monopoly and class rule. Their connection is only dissolved as a result of the compulsion for linear representation.

Of course, the activity of the fascist dictatorship is not limited to the direct regulation of the economic sphere, the relations of production, which is the issue here. But the quintessence of fascist rule emerges more clearly here than anywhere else: the intensive intertwining of the interests of monopoly capital with the state mechanism of the most reactionary, terrorist exercise of power; the fusion of the power of the monopolies with the power of the state into a single gigantic mechanism of exploitative rule.

1. Regulation of the conditions of exploitation

One of the basic aims of finance capital in establishing fascist dictatorships is to "secure" and "improve" the conditions of exploitation and to maximize its profits. The elimination of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, the liquidation or paralysis of the trade unions and the suppression of all progressive forces through bloody terror leads in every fascist dictatorship to the destruction or most serious impairment of both the political and social achievements of the working people. As far as the conditions of exploitation are concerned, the exploited are subjected to the largely unrestricted dictates of the exploiters. While in the field of property relations the function of the dictatorship is generally an essentially restorative or conservative one, for the working people, especially the working class, the conditions of their exploitation deteriorate in the most catastrophic way and are subject to far-reaching qualitative changes.

The German working class, deprived of any legal political class representation, also lost the organizations it had created for the economic struggle. Within a year, the foundations were laid for their complete disenfranchisement, political and economic disarmament and social degradation.

February/March 1933:	Exceptional terror against the Communists; de facto ban on the KPD; expropriation of their assets; annulment of their Reichstag mandates,
March 24:	"Law to remedy the distress of the people and the Reich" (Enabling Act),
March/April 1933:	Wave of terror against free trade unions and works councils,
April 4:	"Act on Works Councils and Economic Associations",
April 26:	Formation of the "Secret State Police Office" in Prussia,
May 2:	Occupation of the trade union buildings by the SA and SS; dissolution of the Free Trade Unions and confiscation of their assets,
May 19:	"Act on Trustees of Labor",
June 22:	Ban on the SPD,
January 20, 1934:	"Law on the Order of National Labor".

It was of decisive importance for the shaping of the conditions of exploitation and economic conditions in general that, as had been the aim of big business since 1918, the Gestapo terror was now used to enforce the boss-at-home position of the employers and suppress all wage and strike struggles of the working people. The fascist laws, which destroyed all the achievements of the working class struggle in this area, were passed in the first months of Hitler's dictatorship under the direct influence and with the decisive participation of the ultra-reactionary forces of German monopoly capital.¹⁹

¹⁹ Jacob Herle, Managing Director of the Reichsstand (Reich Association) of German Industry, described to Paul Reusch (Gutehoffnungshütte) in a letter dated July 22, 1933, how the central industrial association "especially in the last

Gustav Krupp, Chairman of the Reich Association of German Industry, spoke at the famous meeting with Hitler on the evening of February 20, 1933, as spokesman for the 27 top representatives²⁰ of German finance capital present, when he summarized the outcome of the internal meeting in the admonition "that it was high time to finally create clarity in Germany on internal political issues".²¹

In a memorandum dated March 1933, the Reich Association of German Industry reminded the Hitler government of its assurances and expressed the opinion of "leading industrialists" that a new economic and employment policy could only be tackled once the trade union issue had been "resolved".²²

On March 31, Roland Brauweiler wrote to Vice Chancellor Franz von Papen in his capacity as managing member of the executive committee of the Federation of German Employers' Associations. He also [57] urged a "rapid clarification" of the "trade union question". "Action must be taken quickly and decisively," he demanded. His proposal was "the creation of an internally reliable trade union only from the groups behind the government and their privileged status for the conclusion of collective agreements, etc.". In the sense of the carta del lavoro [labor constitution], i.e. not only equality, but clear privileges over the old unions." As a result, according to Brauweiler, a "more or less rapid dissolution of the old trade unions is to be expected in all probability". Until a final "reorganization" is achieved, it is recommended that "the appointment of government commissioners".²³

Such suggestions quickly became a brutal reality. On April 4, while trade union buildings throughout Germany had been occupied by the SA for days and weeks, their facilities destroyed, files confiscated or burned and trade unionists maltreated in a barbaric manner, the government passed a "Law on Works Councils and Economic Associations"²⁴, according to which works council elections could be suspended until September 30, 1933, and which created the legal basis for works councils "who are hostile to the state or the economy". According to this law, works council elections could be suspended until September 30, 1933 and it created the legal basis for dismissing works councillors "who are hostile to the state or the economy" and replacing them with new ones who were loyal to the regime (Paragraph 2).

A circular issued by the Prussian Minister of the Interior on 12 April interpreted this paragraph very broadly and defined in a revealing way what was to be understood by "anti-state or anti-economic" activity: "membership of a communist organization, unity front efforts between social democratic and communist workers, abuse of office (of the works council - D. E.) as a functionary of a political party, etc." The law was also to be applied in the broadest sense against all social democrats. According to the implementing decree, "when dismissing previous and appointing new members of the works council, it should be ensured above all that a nationally-minded and capable works council is appointed; it is therefore not contrary to the law if Marxist members of the works council are dismissed, even if it cannot be proven that they are active in an anti-state or anti-economic sense ... cannot be proven in detail."²⁵

Herle mentioned the new cartel laws in this context (Dirk Stegmann, *Zum Verhältnis von Großindustrie und Nationalsozialismus 1930-1933. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der sog. Machtergreifung*, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, Vol. 13/1973, p. 482, Doc. 21).

²⁰ For more details on this meeting, see *ibid.*, p. 440, p. 477 ff., doc. 18 and 19.

²¹ IMG, Vol. 35, Nuremberg 1949, p. 48, Doc. D-204; note from Krupp dated February 22, 1933.

²² Timothy W. Mason, *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft. Dokumente und Materialien zur deutschen Arbeiterpolitik 1936-1939*, Opladen 1975, p. 34 f., note 24.

²³ *Documents on German History 1933-1935*, ed. by Wolfgang Ruge and Wolfgang Schumann, edited by Kurt Pätzold, Berlin 1977, p. 38, Doc. 23.

²⁴ RGBl. 1933/I, p. 161; "Gesetz über Betriebsvertretungen und über wirtschaftliche Vereinigungen", of 4.4.1933. - The suspension period was later extended (*ibid.*, p. 667; "Gesetz zur Änderung des Gesetzes über Betriebsvertretungen und über wirtschaftliche Vereinbarung", of 26.9.1933).

²⁵ *Soziale Praxis. Zentralblatt für Sozialpolitik und Wohlfahrts-Pflege*, vol. 42, no. 10 (9.3.1933), p. 529; "Neuwahl und Umbildung der Betriebsräte" (with citation of the decree).

The smashing of the Free Trade Unions on May 2 was followed on May 10 by the founding of the "German Labor Front" (DAF), an attempt to feign a kind of representation of workers' interests within the framework of the so-called national community and to infiltrate them with fascist ideas. The "Law on Trustees of Labor" of May 19,²⁶ apparently directly inspired by Ernst Poensgen, the deputy chairman of the board of Vereinigte Stahlwerke, established such government commissioners [58], as demanded by the Federation of German Employers' Associations. As Nazi officials subordinate to the Reich Minister of Labor, they had to monitor all socio-political developments in the individual economic sectors and companies, in particular the "maintenance of industrial peace" and compliance with the general wage freeze, and were able to set the conditions for the conclusion of company regulations, collective agreements and employment contracts with direct state authority "in place of employees' associations, individual employers or employers' associations" (Paragraph 2). A large percentage of them were legal experts (syndicates) of the large monopoly and employers' associations, i.e. selected experts for labor and social fraud.

With the destruction of the workers' parties and trade unions and the de facto elimination of works councils, the fundamental political prerequisite for the comprehensive legal anchoring of those fundamental domestic political goals was in place, which had been sought by the most reactionary circles of the ruling class since time immemorial and had "become the common property of almost all conservative groups" since the years of the Great Depression.²⁷ This legal regulation found its final form in the "Law on the Order of National Labor" (AOG) of January 20, 1934.²⁸

The AOG was the work of representatives and direct agents of finance capital to a greater extent than almost any other Reich law. Essential conceptual foundations of the law, especially the idea of the "company community" as a "community of performance", in which exploitation and class struggle did not prevail, but "leaders" (the entrepreneurs) and "followers" (the workers) worked together and were dependent on each other, had already been developed by leading corporations in the 1920s, above all by the Siemens Group, by the circles around Albert Vögler, the general director (chairman of the board) of Vereinigte Stahlwerke, and Karl Arnhold, the head of the German Institute for Technical Work Training (Dinta), who was supported by Vögler.²⁹

Hans Joachim Reichhardt writes, without providing further information: "In addition to the then Minister of Economics, Schmitt, a number of entrepreneurs with personal ties to Hitler were consulted on the law."³⁰ Fritz Thyssen and Carl Goerde-[59]ler were among those who were directly involved in the creation of the AOG. Goerdeler, then Lord Mayor of

²⁶ RGBl. 1933/I, p. 285; "Law on Trustees of Labor", dated May 19, 1933. - Esenwein-Rothe reports, albeit without citing any sources, that "Ernst Poensgen, the chairman of the Association of German Iron and Steel Industrialists, succeeded, thanks to his connections to Keppler's 'circle of friends' [58], in influencing the formation of will in the leading bodies of the NSDAP to such an extent that the previously appointed economic commissioners were not replaced by the DAF in May 1933, but by 'trustees of labor'." (Ingeborg Esenwein-Rothe, *Die Wirtschaftsverbände von 1933 bis 1945*, (West.)Berlin 1965, p. 42).

²⁷ Tim W. Mason, *Zur Entstehung des Gesetzes zur Ordnung der nationalen Arbeit vom 20. Januar 1934: Ein Versuch über das Verhältnis "archaischer" und "moderner" Momente in der neuesten deutschen Geschichte*, in: *Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. by Hans Mommsen, Dietmar Petzina and Bernd Weisbrod, Düsseldorf 1974, p. 331.

²⁸ RGBl. 1934/I, p. 45 ff.; "Gesetz zur Ordnung der nationalen Arbeit", of January 20, 1934.

²⁹ Ernst Michel, *Sozialgeschichte der industriellen Arbeitswelt, ihrer Krisenformen und Gestaltungsversuche*, Frankfurt a. M. 1947, p. 153; Wolfgang Schlicker, *Arbeitsdienstbestrebungen des deutschen Monopolkapitals in der Weimarer Republik (unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Deutschen Instituts für technische Arbeitsschulung)*, in: *JfW*, 1971/III, p. 102 ff.; Mason, *Entstehung*, p. 336 ff.

³⁰ Hans Joachim Reichhardt, *The German Labor Front. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des nationalsozialistischen Deutschlands und zur Struktur des totalitären Herrschaftssystems*, phil. Diss., (West) Berlin 1956, p. 98, note 1; Mason, *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*, p. 38, lists as persons who "in 1933 came directly from the economy into politics or the civil service" and had to decide on all questions of fascist "social policy": Kurt Schmitt, Ludwig Grauert (Prussian Ministry of the Interior), Franz Seldte (Reich Minister of Labor) and Werner Mansfeld. He also names Karl Raabe as the spokesman for the Ruhr lobby on these issues.

Leipzig and Reich Price Commissioner, with close ties to corporate groups such as Adca/Deutsche Bank, Salzdetfurth/Mansfeld, Gutehoffnungshütte (Paul Reusch), Krupp, and later also to the Bosch Group, demanded in his memorandum of September 7, 1933 "a complete departure from the past", the more ruthless and determined, the better. The economy must finally and definitively be freed "from the shackles of meaningless collective agreements"; what was needed was "a lot of work" and the eight-hour day abolished; the entrepreneur must be given a "free hand" in his business. Goerdeler's draft law contained corresponding paragraphs, provided for a "duty of loyalty" of the workforce towards the plant manager and the appointment of "shop stewards".³¹

The drafting of the AOG in Department III of the Reich Ministry of Labor, which was responsible for wage and social policy, was in the hands of Werner Mansfeld, who had previously been the association manager of the Ruhr companies - legal advisor to the Association for Mining Interests, Essen³² - and had joined the ministry immediately after the transfer of power to the fascists "at the request of industry"³³ and had taken over that department. Mansfeld was also the author of the implementing regulations and the thick commentaries on the AOG. He was closely assisted by Wolfgang Pohl, who had worked in the socio-political department of the AEG and on the editorial staff of the "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" in the 1920s.³⁴

The basic ideas of the law were presented jointly by the Reich Minister of Labor and the Reich Minister of Economics "to the Reich Chancellor at the beginning of November and approved by him".³⁵ At the Cabinet meeting on 12 January 1934, Reich Economics Minister Kurt Schmitt explained that "the draft now also [60] establishes the Führer's principle for the economy, eliminates the idea of class struggle, replaces it with the idea of community and finally, for the first time, establishes the concept of social honor".³⁶ For its authors, the key point of the extensive draft law was the "necessity of the immediate creation of a new system" to replace the previous wage scale system.³⁷

The AOG clearly defined the relationship between the exploiters and the exploited from the outset: "The leader of the company (the entrepreneur - D. E.) decides on all company matters in relation to the followers" (Paragraph 2). The demagogic labeling of work as "national", as a matter of "social honor", which: "for the common benefit of the people and the state", already implied that strikes and other forms of struggle for better working conditions were both immoral and hostile to the people and the state.

The AOG confirmed the institution of the "trustees of labor" and specified their functions. It completely abolished the works councils, an achievement of the November Revolution. The so-called Councils of Confidence introduced by the law were intended to keep up the demagogic pretense. The list of

³¹ Anatomy of War. Neue Dokumente über die Rolle des deutschen Monopolkapitals bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung des zweiten Weltkrieges, (hereafter: Anatomie des Krieges), ed. and in. by Dietrich Eichholtz and Wolfgang Schumann, Berlin 1969, p. 118 ff., Doc.

³² Mason, Origin, p. 330.

³³ Hans Radandt, Kriegsverbrecherkonzern Mansfeld. Die Rolle des Mansfeld-Konzerns bei der Vorbereitung und während des zweiten Weltkrieges, Berlin 1957, p. 192 f.; Rudolf Stahl (Salzdetfurth Group) to Johannes Kiehl (Deutsche Bank), October 28, 1942.

³⁴ Mason, Entstehung, p. 30 - Immediately after the appointment of Kurt Schmitt (General Director of the Allianz insurance group; after his term of office as Minister, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of AEG) as Reich Economics Minister at the end of June 1933, he concluded an agreement with Reich Labour Minister Seldte, "according to which the long-standing social policy advisor to the Reich Economics Ministry, Dr. Wolfgang Pohl, would take over the management of Department III B of the Reich Labour Ministry, while retaining his department in the Reich Economics Ministry. Wolfgang Pohl, would take over the management of Department III B of the Reich Ministry of Labor, which primarily dealt with issues of wage and collective bargaining policy, while retaining his department in the Reich Ministry of Economics" (Soziale Praxis, Vol. 42, II. 30 [27.6.1933], Sp. 901; "Zusammenarbeit zwischen Reichsarbeits- und Reichswirtschaftsministerium") From November 1933, Pohl was also head of the Department for Social Affairs in the Supreme Leadership of the Political Organization of the NSDAP ("Reichsorganisationsleiter" Robert Ley) (Fritz Petrick, Zur sozialen Lage der Arbeiterjugend in Deutschland 1933 bis 1939, Berlin 1974, p. 27 note 16).

³⁵ ZStA Potsdam, Reich Chancellery, Film No. 11 196; Reich Minister of Labor / Reich Minister of Economics to Reich

Chancellery, December 8, 1933.

³⁶ Ibid.; minutes of the cabinet meeting of January 12, 1934.

³⁷ Ibid.; Reich Minister of Labor/Minister of Economics to Reich Chancellery, 8.12.1933.

Candidates for the vote of confidence were put together by the "leader of the company" (paragraph 9); he himself - for example, the general manager of a large company or his representative, such as the head of human resources - chaired the council of confidence (paragraph 5). "Resolutions are not passed in the Council of Confidence, it does not have to make decisions. The leader of the company, who is not relieved of his responsibility by the joint consultation, makes them alone."³⁸

This mockery of workers' representation was primarily intended to "improve working conditions" and to ensure compliance with the plant regulations to be issued by the plant manager, as well as for the

"It was responsible for the "solidarity of all members of the company" and for "settling all disputes within the company community" (Paragraph 6). If this system did not work, e.g. if the workforce rejected the list of shop stewards, the "trustee of labor" could intervene and make compulsory state regulations (Paragraph 9).

The devastating results of the 1934 and 1935 council of confidence elections for the fascists - many workers staying away from the election, a high number of invalid and "no" votes, the establishment of opposing lists by the workers³⁹ - prompted those in power to avoid such elections in the future. They extended the term of office of the acting councils of confidence, which were often appointed by the management and the "trustee of labor", year after year, thus exposing the true character of these "councils".

The "Reichsstand der Deutschen Industrie" characterized the [61] provisions of the law as "programmatic" for the "new social order" and emphasized the "leader principle, which is also legally established for the company" as well as the "duty of loyalty of the followers".⁴⁰

In the application of the fascist leader principle to the relationship of exploitation in the capitalist enterprise, the essence of this characteristic of fascist dictatorships emerged particularly clearly. It was the ideological embellishment of the financial oligarchy's naked class claim to absolute rule over the masses of the working people. An "act of law" of the fascist dictatorship makes the complete fiasco of the theory of "social partnership" advocated by right-wing social democratic leaders obvious.

In the fascist mass demagogy, the extreme claim to power of finance capital codified in the AOG was supplemented and at the same time disguised by the propagation of the "people's community", a variety of the "community ideologies already worn out in the crisis of the capitalist system".⁴¹ The pitiful "scientific" substrate of this ideology can be found on various occasions in contemporary journalism: "Instead of an elaborate apparatus for achieving profit, the company now becomes a community of fellow citizens who have joined together in a company to achieve a particular objective goal. In this enterprise, too, there must be a leader who directs the whole responsibly. But those who help him in his work are not wage slaves who can be bought and sold at will, but comrades of the people who create for a work in the service of the national community."⁴²

³⁸ W(erner) Mansfeld, Die Ordnung der nationalen Arbeit. Handausgabe mit Erläuterungen, Berlin 1943, p. 16, p. 37.

³⁹ 39 Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, ed. by the Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, vol. 5, Berlin 1966, p. 60, p. 96 ff.; Erich Paterna et al, Deutschland von 1933 bis 1939. Von der Machtübertragung an den Faschismus bis zur Entfesselung des zweiten Weltkrieges, Berlin 1969, p. 104 f., p. 185 f.; Jürgen Kuczynski, Darstellung der Lage der Arbeiter in Deutschland von 1933 bis 1945, Vol. 6: Die Geschichte der Lage der Arbeiter unter dem Kapitalismus, Berlin 1964, p. 146 ff.

⁴⁰ Anatomy of War, p. 121 f., Doc. 34; "Geschäftliche Mitteilungen für die Mitglieder des Reichsstandes der Deutschen Industrie", special issue of January 26, 1934.

⁴¹ Klaus Ortwein, Die stufenweise Liquidierung der sozialen Rechte der Lohnabhängigen. From the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" in 1918 to the "Gesetz zur Ordnung der nationalen Arbeit" in 1934, in: Die Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik ed. by Reinhard Kühnl and Gerd Hardach, Cologne 1977, p. 232.

⁴² Otto Mönckmeier, Der Wandel in der Wirtschaftsgesinnung, in: Jahrbuch für nationalsozialistische Wirtschaft, 1935, S. 6.

Mason sums up correctly: "The main beneficiaries of this reorganization of socio-political institutions were the large corporations, which for the first time since the world war entered a phase of huge and secure expansion with rising profit margins."⁴³

In wage policy, after the elimination of the trade unions and the enactment of the *Treuhändergesetz* and the AOG, the fascist state could limit itself to making the monitoring of the wage freeze an obligation for the "trustees of labor". Fascist propaganda spread the seemingly class-neutral slogan of *wage and price freezes* as an unavoidable means of stimulating the national economy. It was hoped that successes in the "job creation" policy would disguise the thoroughly fraudulent nature of this formula. Collectively agreed wages were kept at the crisis level and even lowered - with rapidly increasing employment and growing production - by means of state coercion; lowered above all by hiring many unemployed people under poor collective bargaining conditions. Added to this was the pressure from employers to pay lower wages, which the "trustees of labor" complied with willingly, based on corresponding legal provisions.⁴⁴

[62] In the minds of many, especially younger workers, the end of their unemployment concealed the fact that the employed worker had to work more, i.e. overtime, in order to earn his crisis wage at all - not to mention the pre-crisis wage - and to compensate for the increase in the cost of living, especially the price increases for food, but also the additional compulsory contributions to the DAF and other Nazi organizations and events.

If one calculates the total wage bill paid, its real value in 1937, after absorbing the mass of the unemployed, reached the level of 1928 again - and this with increased employment and production, longer working hours and a considerable increase in the intensity of work. Such a development was unique in the history of imperialism.

The consequences of fascist policy corresponded to the secret ideal of the exploiters. The income of all workers and employees barely rose by 24 percent between 1932 and 1937, while that of all others, i.e. the propertied classes, increased two and a half times. Jürgen Kuczynski calculates from this gap between the income of the exploited and the exploiters that the rate of relative wages fell by around half and summarizes: "The contrasts between the rich and the poor intensified faster under fascism than ever before in the history of the German or any other nation."⁴⁵

The degradation of German workers to commandos, to "disciplined soldiers of labor", as Gustav Krupp put it⁴⁶, also served to prepare for war economically, politically and morally. The same purpose was served by tying the worker to the company and the workplace, which was already well known to the German working class from the time of the First World War. In the course of the pre-war years, it became a further foundation stone for the building of state monopoly slavery. In the course of 1934, the first ordinances were issued that restricted the freedom of labor, i.e. above all the right to dismissal and free choice of workplace, initially for individual occupational groups.⁴⁷ Looking ahead, in March 1935 the IG Farben Group demanded that "all eligible workers be integrated into the military in the event of war and placed under the control of the relevant organs of the military economy" - bodies that were to be formed or controlled by the companies and industrial associations themselves.⁴⁸

The legal provisions were extended and tightened as the shortage of workers, especially skilled workers, for the war effort increased. With the year 1938, with

⁴³ Mason, *Origin*, p. 327.

⁴⁴ Derselbe, *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*, p. 66, note 78.

⁴⁵ Kuczynski, p. 176.

⁴⁶ Paterna et al, p. 98 f.

⁴⁷ Kuczynski, p. 150 ff., p. 220 ff.

⁴⁸ *Anatomy of War*, p. 131 f., Doc. 38; Memorandum of the IG Farben Group for the Armaments Advisory Council of the Reich Ministry of Defense of March 1935.

At the beginning of the phase of rapid successive annexations and immediate preparations for the war, the fascists perfected the system of state-monopoly compulsory regulation of the workforce, the basic features of which had been in place since 1936. With new laws, they laid the foundations for general compulsory labor and compulsory service. Finally, during the war, the shackling of the worker to the company went so far that underemployed companies, such as construction companies, literally leased their workers to others.

[63] A particularly dark chapter in the history of the fascist dictatorship in Germany was the deportation of 12 to 14 million foreign citizens, including prisoners of war and concentration camp inmates, to Germany as forced laborers during the war. The forced labor system was adequate for the German monopolies' unbridled drive for expansion and was fully in line with their insatiable hunger for profit. Contrary to all later protective claims by the German monopoly powers about the compulsion to employ foreign workers, to which they were allegedly subjected by the fascist authorities, this system was their own creation and in many respects the realization of their imperialist ideal of the profitable, risk-free exploitation of foreign auxiliary peoples of colonial status.

In a lecture given by a director of the Fieseler aircraft company in the summer of 1943 to leading employees of the Junkers company on the "Use of foreigners in the German armaments industry", he listed the advantages of forced labor for the German monopolies: "The greatest advantage of employing foreigners ... lies in the fact that we only have to give orders, there is no objection, no negotiation is necessary ... The foreigner is immediately on the spot when he is needed for overtime and Sunday work ... On the whole, the proportion of working hours is greater than for German followers. The relief of German men in places harmful to health ... has occurred and is of considerable value."

The lecturer emphasized how "practical" it was that forced labour could be "soldiered" in everything. Language skills were not necessary in themselves, because "communication in German command form" was completely sufficient with the foreign workers, who for him only existed as numbers. His conclusions pointed to the continuation of the forced labor system after the war: "With the deployment of foreigners, the German has for the first time adopted and utilized the activities of auxiliary peoples on a huge scale and has learned lessons and gained experience from them. It will be good to gather all this wealth of experience in an appointed position during or at the latest after the war." However, he recognized the essential prerequisite of this system: "Only power holds everything together, and woe betide us if it were otherwise."⁴⁹

The social status of the proletariat deteriorates catastrophically and generally under the fascist dictatorship, despite all the propaganda bluster. Politically disenfranchised, deprived of its class organizations, the working class is attacked by fascism in a humiliating way, even in its historically achieved class position. The wage laborer is doubly free under capitalism: free from the means of production, which are the property of the capitalist class, but also free from feudal fetters, from serfdom, i.e. free enough to sell his labor power to capital as he sees fit.

The ownership of the means of production remains in the hands of the bourgeoisie; with the help of fascism, it is even concentrated there in an unprecedented way. On the other hand, the historically achieved freedom of wage laborers to sell their labor power as they see fit is being reduced. It is reduced to the level of state-imposed wage slavery, the main conditions of which are determined within a minimal margin between the regulations of fascist laws and the arbitrariness of [64] entrepreneurs. Fascism additionally imposes the stamp of unmediated coercion on wage labor, "mediated forced labor"⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ ZStA Potsdam, film collection, film no. 4184; lecture by Dir. Freyer from 22.6.1943.

⁵⁰ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Berlin 1953, p. 232.

Of course, fascism only helps traits and tendencies of capitalism, imperialism and colonialism to fully develop by bloodily suppressing the social counterforce, the working class that is ready to fight. These are not qualitatively new, "fascist" traits in the capitalist economy. The old relations of production and exploitation are not being abolished, but only deepened and intensified. The means and methods for this are of a political, specifically fascist nature; the instruments as a whole are those of state-monopoly capitalism.

2. Consolidation of ownership structures - concentration of private property and profit

The bloody persecution of the revolutionary forces of the workers' movement and the omnipresent terror against anyone who resisted the regime were what finance capital in Germany enthusiastically welcomed as the "restoration of peace and order", as the "basis for a stable government foundation"⁵¹. At the Annual General Meeting of Deutsche Bank und Disconto-Gesellschaft on June 2, 1933, the Board of Directors triumphantly stated in its report: "With the Reichstag election of March 5, 1933 and the adoption of the Enabling Act of March 23, 1933, a clear decision has been made in the field of German politics. It gives the ... nationally united forces the basis to develop courageously."⁵² *Courage* thus inspired the monopolists - now that their executioners were wading in the blood of revolutionary workers; and for them, *development* was synonymous with unrestrained exploitation of the working masses held down by terror.

The terror function as a basic function of every fascist dictatorship served directly to stabilize capitalist property and exploitation relations and contributed to the consolidation and expansion of capital's economic power. In historical accounts, this circumstance often takes an unjustified back seat in terms of importance to the incipient armaments boom. In fact, it was initially still uncertain whether and how the crisis - which had already been abating for months - could be overcome more quickly through economic injections and a state-monopoly-driven revival, particularly through armaments orders. However, from the very first day of the transfer of power, the financial oligarchy firmly believed that the burdens and losses of the crisis could now be shifted as far as possible onto the working masses, above all the working class.

Even more than the gradual revival of the economy that began in the second half of 1932, it was this optimistic conviction of the German bourgeoisie that was reflected in the profit and loss accounts of German stock corporations, where the red figures disappeared almost overnight (see Table 1). [65]

Table 1

Profit and loss account of German stock corporations 1933

Quarter	Profit	Loss	Balance	Balance of the previous year (for comparison)
	(in RM million)			
I/1933	32,7	32,2	+ 0,5	- 67,8
I I/1933	70,4	30,5	+ 39,9	- 93,9
III/1933	58,4	63,6	- 5,2	-136,3
IV/1933	377,6	355,0	+ 22,6	- 458,6

Source: *Konjunkturstatistisches Handbuch 1936*, ed. by Ernst Wagemann, Berlin 1935, p. 155 f. (excluding banks, insurance companies and holding companies).

⁵¹ ZStA Potsdam, Nuremberg Succession Trials, Case 10 (Krupp Trial), Film No. 423, ADB 6, Doc. NI-910; Gustav Krupp to Hitler dated March 24, 1933 (i.e. on the day of the promulgation of the Enabling Act! Krupp was referring directly to the result of the March elections).

⁵² Ibid., Deutsche Bank, no. 5960, vol. 4.

The historical constellation also sheds light on the theoretical side of the problem: the enthronement of a fascist regime entails the stabilization or restoration of capitalist-monopolistic property relations as an - intended - consequence in the economic field, primarily due to the fact that the revolutionary vanguard of the working class and all other organized progressive forces, including the trade unions, are largely paralyzed by fascist terror. This can be considered a characteristic of every fully developed fascist dictatorship.

The fuelling of economic revival through forced rearmament, on the other hand, was a specific feature of German history since 1933. The internal connection between the two levels of impact of the Nazi dictatorship was clear: the paralysis of progressive social forces through fascist terror was a prerequisite for forced rearmament.

In Germany, both factors - terroristic suppression of the working people and rearmament - have worked in the same direction since 1933 and have caused the capital wealth of the bourgeoisie to swell like an avalanche. After five years of fascist dictatorship, the Reich statistics for corporations showed an increase in the income (only taxable income) of such companies to 485 percent.

Table 2

Taxable income of the AG and GmbH in 1933 and 1938

Year	Number of taxable AGs and GmbHs	Taxable income (in millions of RM)	
		in total	average per The company
1933	17983	1104	0,06
1938	18999	5349	0,28

Source: Anatomy of the war. Neue Dokumente über die Rolle des deutschen Monopolkapitals bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung des zweiten Weltkrieges (New documents on the role of German monopoly capital in the preparation and execution of the Second World War), ed. and imported by Dietrich Eichholtz and Wolfgang Schumann, Berlin 1969, p. 32.

[66] The mass of capital wealth was concentrated in the hands of large companies. The companies with two million RM capital and above - 2.2 percent of all companies with around two thirds of all capital - increased the statistically recorded income to 847 percent.

Table 3

Taxable income of the AG and GmbH in 1933 and 1938

Year	Number of taxable AGs and GmbHs with two million RM or more in capital	Taxable income (in millions of RM)	
		in total	average per The company
1933	71	1104	0,06
1938	423	5349	0,28

Source: Anatomy of the war. Neue Dokumente über die Rolle des deutschen Monopolkapitals bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung des zweiten Weltkrieges (New documents on the role of German monopoly capital in the preparation and conduct of the Second World War), ed. and imported by Dietrich Eichholtz and Wolfgang Schumann, Berlin 1969, p. 32.

The surge in profits and the demands of armaments on the economy stimulated investment activity. The investment boom concentrated on the means of production industries. The consumer goods industries, on the other hand, were not in a position to compensate for the disinvestment since 1929 and simply reproduce the production apparatus. The blatant economic disproportion that resulted from this bore witness to a one-sided, ruthless, anti-popular rearmament.

At the same time, this revealed an unprecedented privileging of the large corporations, which occupied an all-dominant position, especially in the manufacturing industries (basic industries, chemicals, electrical industry, machine and vehicle construction, energy industry, construction industry).

In certain areas of production and "substitute" production that were important for the rearmament, the state helped industry, partly with price and sales guarantees (synthetic fuel and rubber), partly with equity stakes (various basic industries, factories for weapons, ammunition, powder, explosives, poisonous gases, aircraft industry). The state retained overall control of Brabag, a joint venture between the state, coal and steel and chemical monopolies, and similar companies. A number of large companies were considered state-owned, including production facilities belonging to the Wehrmacht, most of the large rayon factories and the "Reichswerke AG für Erzbergbau und Eisenhütten 'Hermann Göring'" monopoly.

At a stage of forced imperialist armament and preparation for war - not to mention wartime - it is nothing historically unique and is not limited to fascist dictatorships that the state supports, creates and sometimes even finances and operates companies and branches of production whose profitability generally appears uncertain and often only becomes apparent or is only to become apparent in the event of war. As a rule, this does not happen without competitive antagonisms being played out within the ruling class. This is not about the fear of nationalization on the part of the economic powers that be - even if the monopolies and monopoly groups concerned operate and operate with this argument - but rather about their own monopoly position, about capitalist profitability and monopoly profit.

The attempt repeatedly made by bourgeois authors to interpret such clashes as antagonism between the fascist state and "the economy" is misguided. The founding of the Reichswerke "Hermann Göring" in the summer of 1937 is often cited as evidence that the fascist state had broken the resistance of "industry" to the establishment of a large state-owned corporation with the threat of violence, thereby establishing or stabilizing its rule or that of the fascist party over "the economy". In reality, the state, in the form of the four-year plan authorities, was primarily attempting to "socialize" the losses in an important branch of industry that had to occur in preparation for the war and an economic blockade. As far as the interests of the coal and steel companies as prospective competitors were affected, they ultimately negotiated very favorable conditions.⁵³

The state enterprises in fascist Germany - as in all other imperialist states - were fully integrated into the system of private capitalist-monopolistic property relations and private appropriation. Dietmar Petzina comes closer to this conclusion - in contrast to other bourgeois authors, in particular the traditional advocates of the theory of totalitarianism - when he acknowledges that "the state enterprises established under the Four-Year Plan were also organized in the form of private enterprises and were seamlessly integrated into the private capitalist system".⁵⁴

It is sometimes argued that the leading fascist politicians themselves became large owners of capital, monopolists, through the robbery and other use of their political power; this expanded the "narrowest circle" of monopoly capital. According to Kuczynski, the leaders of the NSDAP, for example, had been "accepted into the ruling class" with "full monopoly capitalist rights", they had become "'by their own rights' big capitalists, trust barons and corporate powers".⁵⁵

⁵³ Eichholtz, *Kriegswirtschaft*, p. 50 ff.

⁵⁴ Dieter Petzina, *Autarkiepolitik im Dritten Reich. The National Socialist Four-Year Plan*, Stuttgart 1968, p. 196.

⁵⁵ Kuczynski, p. 38.

This may apply to dictatorships that last for decades and, moreover, die a gentle death, so to speak, because they cannot be overthrown by force and smashed from the ground up; possibly to the Spanish dictatorship - as far as anything verifiable can be said about Spain. The German example hardly confirms this view. Even in a fascist dictatorship with an extreme concentration of state power in the hands of a "leader" and a handful of paladins like the German one, state property and the property of the fascist party - the above-mentioned view is based on such evidence - are not simply transformed into private property. For a variety of reasons, both the monopoly bourgeoisie and the politically leading clique pay attention to this. The fascist leaders' power of disposal over the aforementioned property also comes up against the limits of both objective laws and state regulations and the business customs of the ruling capitalist order.

[68] If fascist leaders such as Hitler, Göring and Himmler also had great opportunities for personal enrichment due to their position of power in the state and Nazi party, they had such opportunities in accordance with their suitability and proven ability as *political* representatives of the system. Where - which was rarely the case - the ownership of large companies in state or party ownership was directly exercised or controlled by exposed fascist politicians, as was the case with the monopoly companies of mass communication, this was done precisely for the purpose of using the means of demagoguery and mass manipulation as a combined means of *political* rule.

In other words, Göring was not "one of the largest iron and steel trusts in the world", Himmler was not "the largest landowner", nor was he the owner of the concentration camp storage facilities or the concentration camp labor slaves, and Hitler was not "the largest publisher"⁵⁶; the list can be continued with Goebbels (film and radio monopoly) and Ley (DAF assets and companies).

More characteristic of the years of the fascist dictatorship than the founding or promotion of state-owned enterprises was the reprivatization of numerous state-owned enterprises and state capital shares in banks, industrial and transport companies. However, the details of this development have so far only been examined very sporadically; nothing is known about the total extent of reprivatization. Of particular note are the major state holdings in Vereinigte Stahlwerke, Dresdner Bank and the large overseas shipping companies Hapag and Norddeutscher Lloyd, some of which were reprivatized before the war and some during the war at a profit of tens of millions of marks for the monopolies. The Reichswerke "Hermann Göring" were also to be privatized later, i.e. after the victorious end of the war - this prospect had been opened up to the German industrial and banking lords from the outset - and work on this began as early as 1942.

The Krupp Group probably made the largest single transaction with state money in favor of private property. In November 1943, Hitler signed a special Reich law, the so-called Lex Krupp ("Decree of the Führer on the Family Business of Fried. Krupp")⁵⁷, according to which the Group was transformed from a stock corporation back into a "family business with specially regulated succession". The main purpose of the law was to save the Krupp family countless millions in inheritance tax when their son Alfried took over Bertha Krupp's group assets and Gustav Krupp's group management. Krupp's tax debt amounted to considerably more than RM 400 million⁵⁸, a sum that any civic state could have redeemed in return for a substantial state share in the capital of the company in question. Under the national "socialist" dictatorship in 1944 - in the middle of the war, when rivers of blood were flowing on the battlefields - another "solution" was found: Krupp

⁵⁶ Ibid. - Specifically on the ownership of the SS-Wirtschaftsverwaltungshauptamt group, see Götz Dieckmann, Existenzbedingungen und Widerstand im Konzentrationslager Dora-Mittelbau unter dem Aspekt der funktionellen Einbeziehung der SS in das System der faschistischen Kriegswirtschaft, phil. Diss., Berlin 1968, p. 13 ff., p. 23 ff.

⁵⁷ RGBl. 1943/I, p. 184 f.; Decree of 12.11.1943.

⁵⁸ ZStA Potsdam, Reich Ministry of Finance No. B 7188/I, p. 251 ff.; record (Reich Ministry of Finance) dated May 12, 1944.

was to pay five percent of the profit to be reported as taxable, i.e. around RM 5 million, to the Reich Ministry of Finance "for an unlimited period".⁵⁹

The full significance of this "inheritance law" for one of Europe's largest mining and armaments companies only became apparent after the fall of the fascist dictatorship, when Germany lay in ruins but Alfred Krupp, after a short stay in the Nuremberg war crimes prison, was able to recover his entire fortune - still worth billions, according to his own lawyers' calculations - from the American confiscation.

Paradoxically, the so-called Aryanization, i.e. the expropriation of Jewish private property, was also not characteristic of the Hitler dictatorship's fundamental hostility to property, but on the contrary, of the driving force behind the promotion of capitalist private property and the interests of large capital owners. The property of citizens of Jewish origin was not appropriated by the fascist state; the "Aryanizers" were predominantly "private" names such as Flick, Mannesmann, Abs, Horten, names of large and small "Aryan" companies and banks that enriched themselves with this property. The amounts of foreign currency required to "compensate" the former owners were paid or arranged by the Reichsbank if the client was influential enough. Hundreds and thousands of Aryanization transactions came together at the major banks, above all Deutsche Bank and Dresdner Bank.

German imperialism's policy of occupation and "reorganization" ultimately put paid to the theories of "Hitler's war", which, according to Mason, "ran counter to the interests of the economically ruling classes ... in essential points"⁶⁰, of the "racial-ideological war of extermination" and the like ad surdum. Everywhere it was the interests of the monopolies, the large armaments companies and banks that were primarily taken into account in the plundering and looting as well as in the planning of war aims and world domination. The "original accumulation"⁶¹, which the monopolies carried out in the annexed and occupied territories with the help of military force and under political pressure, amounted to tens of billions of Reichsmarks in value, as far as can be estimated at all.

With regard to the occupied territory of the USSR, where the socialist state and social order was also to liquidate its basis, the socialist property relations, it was initially said that ownership of all agricultural and commercial enterprises was "transferred to the Reich".⁶² "Final ownership regulations" with regard to these "economic assets" were "fundamentally excluded until further notice".⁶³

However, the monopolies managed to get Hitler himself to confirm and promise them the future transfer of ownership via Minister Albert Speer. Speer had taken the opportunity to intervene in this regard when he reported to Hitler on June 4, 1942 about the planned expansion of the Donets district into a German armaments center and the personnel and material difficulties that arose. "In this [70] connection, the question was raised as to whether the works (of the Donets Basin - D. E.) would be better managed by private trustees in order to achieve an accelerated reconstruction by all means."⁶⁴ Speer's minutes of the meeting state succinctly: "On this occasion, the Führer returns to the fact that he does not want any (state-organized - D. E.) monopoly companies in the East, but that private initiative should be used."⁶⁵ Since then, it had been common knowledge in insider circles of the ruling class - for example in the

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 281, 281 R; Schwerin v. Krosigk to Lammers dated September 18, 1944.

⁶⁰ Mason, *Primacy of Politics*, p. 474.

⁶¹ Kuczynski, p. 40 f.

⁶² Dietrich Eichholtz, *Die Richtlinien Görings für die Wirtschaftspolitik auf dem besetzten sowjetischen Territorium vom November 8, 1941*, in: *Bulletin of the Working Group "Second World War"*, 1-2/1977, p. 101.

⁶³ ZStA Potsdam, film collection, film no. 10634; Göring's decree on "Principles for fiduciary administration in the occupied eastern territories" of May 20, 1942.

⁶⁴ BA Koblenz, II 13 I/1074; Wirtschaftsgruppe Eisen schaffende Industrie to Reichsgruppe Industrie (Ostreferat), June 22, 1942.

⁶⁵ ZStA Potsdam, Nuremberg Succession Trials, Case 11 (Wilhelmstrasse Trial) No. 414, Bl. 2, Doc. R-124; Prot. of the "Führerbesprechung" of June 4, 1942, item 34.

Reichsgruppe Industrie - "that the private companies to be appointed as "trustees" for the Soviet factories (D. E.) could keep the factories after the war".⁶⁶

At the so-called Linz Armaments Conference at the end of June 1944, the last major exhibition of the crème de la crème of the German war economy grouped around the Reich Ministry of Armaments and War Production, the armaments magnates gathered there had Hitler himself confirm their claims to ownership and profit for the future. On June 26, Hitler spoke in the "Platterhof", a hotel on the Obersalzberg, to the inner circle of invitees, around 150 people. Hitler, who was under the direct impression of the Soviet offensives in the east and the progress of the invading armies in the west and south, offered those present "the sight of a man in the most severe state of exhaustion and a temporal absence of spirit".⁶⁷ However, in a central point of his speech, he stuck to the concept given to him by Speer and promised the representatives of German monopoly capital:

"If this war is decided with our victory, then the private initiative of the German economy will experience its greatest era!"⁶⁸

As the end of the war approached, the monopolies, faced with the threat of defeat, began to take precautions to save their power, which they saw as being endangered above all by the approaching Soviet army and by future revolutionary transformations in Germany, such as a "people's front government in Berlin" (Flick). At the center of their concerns was the basis of their existence and dominion, capital ownership, which had grown to enormous proportions through the ruthless exploitation of German and foreign workers, through enormous armaments and war profits, through robbery and plundering in foreign countries. Bank accounts and property papers were now transferred from East to West Germany. Significant sums of assets and profits were transferred to neutral foreign countries. Foreign front men were used to set up front companies abroad. In 1944, Friedrich Flick undertook a radical reorganization of his company. In March

He "gave away" 90 percent of the capital of the holding company of his corporate empire, Friedrich Flick KG, to his two sons, but retained sole management control. In the fall, he divided the Group into four production groups and moved the administration of the entire Group from Berlin to Düsseldorf.

[71] The monopolists also feared that, as Walter Rohland, General Director of Vereinigte Stahlwerke, had told Albert Speer in a confidential conversation in April 1944, "wanton destruction could be ordered by a desperate leadership" in their own country.⁶⁹ When, in March 1945, Hitler actually ordered the barbaric "scorched earth" policy to be continued on domestic soil, which the fascists had used since the beginning of their retreat in the Soviet Union, he was forced to de facto withdraw the order just ten days later; Speer had threatened him with the united resistance of the top echelons of the war economy, who were now in league with ministers, key military leaders and a whole series of Gauleiters and SS leaders.⁷⁰

The fascist propaganda and public statements of the Nazi regime on this point stood in stark contradiction to the comprehensive protection and unprecedented promotion of capitalist monopolistic property. This contradiction was a characteristic sign of the regime's internal, immanent weakness and is also typical of other fascist dictatorships. The German fascists were always aware of the fact that the property relations, and here again primarily the superiority of the property of the large monopolies in the

⁶⁶ BA Koblenz, R 13 I/1074; Wirtschaftsgruppe Eisen schaffende Industrie to Reichsgruppe Industrie (Ostreferat), June 22, 1942.

⁶⁷ Hans Kehr, Crisis manager in the Third Reich. 6 years of peace - 6 years of war. Memories, Düsseldorf 1973, p. 396.

⁶⁸ "Es spricht der Führer". 7 exemplary Hitler speeches, ed. and explained by Hildegard v. Kotze Helmut Krausnick with the collaboration of F. A. Krummacker, Gütersloh 1966, p. 352.

⁶⁹ Albert Speer, Erinnerungen, Berlin 1971, p. 350.

⁷⁰ Dietrich Eichholtz, Manager des staatsmonopolistischen Kapitalismus. Bourgeois literature on fascist ministries and the military in the war economy 1939 to 1945, in: JfW, 1974/III, p. 231 ff.

economy, were a neuralgic point for their social demagogy. In addition to anti-communist and chauvinist slogans, the NSDAP had gathered its mass following under its banner with the help of pseudo-revolutionary propaganda against "grasping capital", especially Jewish capital, and against the superior power of capital, for example of department stores, over the commercial middle class and small businesses. However, the relevant points of the so-called party program had already been revised before 1933 or the Nazi leadership had made sufficiently reassuring statements to its big business protectors. Hjalmar Schacht preferred to refer to these points when he often referred to Hitler's masterly ability, in his opinion, to play the "mass piano".

After 1933, when the regime's obvious obedience to capitalist-monopolistic property disappointed some of its mass followers, the fascist demagogues resorted to incitement against the property of entrepreneurs of Jewish origin. They also subordinated their "socialism" to the heresy of their racism in other respects. The counterparts to the "Aryanization" of Jewish property at home and in the countries invaded during the war and to the theft of the property of the "Jewish-Bolshevik subhumans", i.e. socialist property in the USSR, were the "hereditary farm" legislation and the comprehensive "Germanization" and settlement plans in Eastern Europe.

After the war, according to a common propaganda slogan, the German "front-line soldiers" in particular were to be compensated from the large haul of small and medium-sized businesses, stores, workshops, farms and other properties and benefices. This solution, again in relation to Eastern Europe, especially the occupied Soviet territories, was intended to boost morale at the front, behind the front and in Germany itself.

Those who actually enriched themselves with Soviet and Polish property on a large scale [72] already during the war or secured the property titles for themselves were the German monopolies - such as the founding companies of Kontinentale Öl AG and the "godfathers" of Berg- und Hüttenwerks- gesellschaft Ost mbH -' as well as a group of generals and field marshals who received donations from Hitler in the form of large estates.⁷¹

The outline of the social structure that the German imperialists wanted to establish as far as the Volga and the Urals was thus already recognizable: very similar to that in Germany itself, but extended by a layer of colonially exploited and cruelly oppressed Helots numbering in the tens of millions, namely the rest of the indigenous population.

The problem of property relations always remained one of the weakest points in the National Socialist credo. The German fascists did their utmost to feed their broad base of supporters with fantasies about the "obligatory" ownership of Krupp and its associates, which had to serve the "national community" under state control according to the principle of "public benefit comes before self-interest". The state-monopoly regulatory apparatus, which of course was not a coercive mechanism imposed on "the economy" by the Nazi Party and the state, but in reality an apparatus of state-sanctioned coercive rule by the armaments monopolies over the entire war economy, gave these phrases a semblance of reality, especially during the war.

The fascist strategy of liquidating the class struggle of the exploited and thus preventing class antagonisms from being played out - through terror, demagogy, mass manipulation and war - was doomed to failure from the outset.

[73]

⁷¹ Olaf Groehler, Die Güter der Generale. Dotationen im zweiten Weltkrieg, in: ZfG, 5/1971, p. 655 f.

Ernst Gottschling: The Fascist State. The German example

1. Civil democracy and fascist regime

The uniform type of the bourgeois state, the main political instrument of the capitalist class for maintaining its class rule, is essentially determined by the fact that it arises on the basis of capitalist relations of production and serves to preserve and expand them. Its forms, however, are manifold. We must proceed from Lenin's statement in his work "State and Revolution": "The forms of bourgeois states are extraordinarily diverse, but their essence is one and the same: all these states are, one way or another, but in the last analysis, necessarily a *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*."¹

In the bourgeois state of the 20th century, we can distinguish between two main forms: bourgeois democracy and the fascist regime. In this sense, Dimitroff called the rise to power of fascism "the *replacement of one form of state of the class rule of the bourgeoisie, bourgeois democracy, by another, by the open terrorist dictatorship*".² Bourgeois democracy and fascist regimes therefore have fundamental similarities and at the same time differ from each other.

In defending its political rule, the bourgeoisie in all countries uses two main methods. Lenin called the first method "the method of force, the method of refusing to make any concessions to the labor movement, the method of maintaining all old and outlived institutions, the method of unyielding rejection of reforms ... The second method is the method of 'liberalism', the steps in the direction of the development of political rights, in the direction of reforms, concessions, etc."³ These two main methods of exercising power are reflected in the organizational-political structures of the bourgeois state, which requires an "appropriate" internal constitution for the application of the respective methods of power.

The two aforementioned main methods of realizing power, the method of "liberalism" and the method of violence, are used both alternately and in combination. The bourgeoisie is guided by its respective assessment of the situation when it decides to use its extensive range of instruments in one way or another, although this does not depend solely on it, but always also on the strength of the class opponents. Whatever the specific form of securing power in a capitalist state may be in an individual case, either one or the other main method of suppressing the class opponents will always prevail.⁴

On the one hand, in the examination of bourgeois democracy as the main form of capitalism the "difference between the gradations of democratism and between the different character of one or other of its forms" should not be overlooked in the "normal" form of government.⁵ On the other hand, there are also different gradations of anti-democratism, different forms of authoritarian regimes up to fascist ones, whereby even between the fascist states there are differences in the forms of organization and activity, which are highly relevant for the exact assessment of the exercise of political power by the imperialist bourgeoisie. Under the rule of the swastika, for example, the concentration camp system has attained dimensions unparalleled anywhere else, although it was not invented by the German fascists and is still practiced today.

¹ V. I. Lenin, State and Revolution, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 25, Berlin 1960, p. 425.

² Georgi Dimitroff, The Offensive of Fascism and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle for the Unity of the Working Class against Fascism, in: VII World Congress of the Communist International, Berlin 1975, p. 94.

³ V. I. Lenin, Die Differenzen in der europäischen Arbeiterbewegung, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 16, 1971, p. 356.

⁴ See Imperialist Class Politics under Pressure to Adapt Berlin 1973, p. 61 ff.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 9, Berlin 1964, p. 39 f.

There are therefore intermediate stages of authoritarianism between bourgeois democracy in its various forms and fascist dictatorship with its specific characteristics. These can be relatively long-lasting in the form of military-police regimes, as in Latin America. However, they can also be various temporary transitional forms of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie - stages that either prepare the transition to fascism (in Germany between 1930 and 1933) or, conversely, the return to bourgeois democracy (in Spain after the death of Franco in 1975). According to Lenin, "political democracy is only one of the possible *forms* (although theoretically the normal form for 'pure' capitalism) of the superstructure over capitalism. As the facts show, both capitalism and imperialism develop with *every* political form and subordinate themselves to *all* forms."⁶

It is therefore essential for the working class to precisely analyze the concrete forms of expression of bourgeois political rule, taking into account time and place, because only in this way will it be able to successfully master the specific tasks arising from the respective situation.

Bourgeois democracy developed in a long, contradictory process into a typical form of the exercise of power by the bourgeoisie. Its most important characteristics are

- formal equality of all citizens, concretized in civil-democratic rights and freedoms;
- electable representative bodies at central and local level with certain powers;
- functional separation of the legislative, executive and judicial institutions;
- civil legality; [75]
- legal admission of communist and workers' parties and other organizations of the working class.

These characteristics are not always present everywhere from the beginning. As a rule, the existence of legal working-class parties was only enforced through persistent struggle by working people. The same can be said of a number of democratic rights and freedoms. As a manifestation of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, bourgeois democracy functions on the basis of the economic and social inequality of its members. That is why it is narrow, limited and hypocritical. That is why bourgeois democracy has never been fully realized in any country. Nevertheless, it is "the best form of government for the proletariat under capitalism".⁷ In it the working class finds the most favorable conditions for gathering its forces and those of its allies and preparing them for the socialist revolution.

The increasing strength of the working class, its growing organization and consciousness, its growing ability to use democratic rights and freedoms in its own interest for the struggle for real equality, contrary to their bourgeois purpose, or to enforce them in the first place - think of the right to strike - lead to the bourgeoisie seeing itself forced again and again to act contrary to its own principles of democracy, to break its own legality in order to maintain its power.

Lenin wrote: "*The more developed democracy is, the closer pogroms or civil war come to every profound political conflict that endangers the bourgeoisie.*"⁸ The principles of bourgeois democracy gradually become a fetter for the bourgeoisie, and with the transition to imperialism the contradictions between the political and legal forms and their economic content (monopolization of economic life) increase to such an extent that a crisis of bourgeois democracy finally occurs. Lenin characterizes this lawful development as follows: "Capitalism in general and imperialism in particular

⁶ Derselbe, Die Ergebnisse der Diskussion über die Selbstbestimmung, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 22, Berlin 1960, p. 332.

⁷ The same, State and Revolution, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 25, p. 410.

⁸ The same author, Die proletarische Revolution und der Renegat Kautsky, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 28, Berlin 1959, p. 244.

The first transforms democracy into an illusion - and at the same time capitalism generates democratic aspirations in the masses, it creates democratic institutions, it intensifies the antagonism between imperialism, which negates democracy, and the masses striving for democracy."⁹

Imperialism is, in its political essence, the negation of democracy. However, the extent to which this tendency is realized in each case is a question of the relationship of class forces and depends on the strength of the opposing tendency, the striving of the masses for democracy. In some cases, this tendency, which is typical of imperialism, has led to the establishment of fascist regimes. Often, however, the working class succeeds in neutralizing or overcoming this reactionary tendency, whether by forcing democratic reforms - as after the fall of fascism in Portugal in 1974 - or by successfully tackling the socialist upheaval once the subjective conditions are in place and a revolutionary situation has arisen.

The imperialist bourgeoisie responded to the revolutionary upsurge, which led to the emergence of the first socialist state in the world in Russia and which swept through large parts of the European continent in its wake, by radically turning away from the principles of bourgeois democracy, parliamentarism, human and civil rights, which had previously been proclaimed as sacred. It attempted to counter the pressure of ever broader masses to overthrow the capitalist order by establishing terrorist regimes. The turn to anti-democratic practices of exercising power embodied the counter-offensive of capital.

The fascist regime as one of the two main forms of the modern bourgeois state has also grown directly out of capitalist society. It is a product of its general crisis. Capitalist society is the soil on which the fascist state could emerge. It has provided it with the conditions for growth. That is why the fascist state has essential traits in common with bourgeois democracy. Like the latter, it is destined to serve to secure the positions of power of the last exploiting class. In it, however, the aggressive and misanthropic nature of the imperialist system of rule, the rejection of any democratic conditions, is expressed most visibly. The "turn from democracy to political reaction"¹⁰ as a general tendency of imperialism led to fascism rearing its head in a number of European states in the 1920s and 1930s, in accordance with the concrete balance of power after the First World War.

The establishment of fascist dictatorships is not a historical inevitability. It is only the imperialist bourgeoisie's desire to negate democracy that is lawful. This is why fascism did not come to power in all European capitalist states after the First World War. For example, a powerful anti-fascist popular front movement prevented its establishment in France in the mid-1930s. Wherever the workers' movement was divided within itself, it was inadequately able to cope with the onslaught of reaction and, despite the self-sacrificing struggle of the communists in particular, was unable to avert the new form of bourgeois tyranny that had been established in one way or another. This most brutal form of dictatorship of the monopoly bourgeoisie was therefore an expression of the weakness of the working class. At the same time, it was an expression of the weakness of the bourgeoisie insofar as the latter proved unable to pursue its economic and political goals by the conventional means of bourgeois democracy and therefore resorted to violence.

The main characteristics of fascist regimes in terms of state law are:

- Liquidation of civil-democratic rights and freedoms, abolition of the principles of formal equality and the inviolability of the person;
- Abolition or extensive devaluation of eligible representative bodies;

⁹ The same author, Reply to P. Kijewski (J. Pyatakow), in: Lenin, Werke, Vol. 23, Berlin 1964, p. 14.

¹⁰ The same author, Über eine Karikatur auf den Marxismus und über den "imperialistischen Ökonomismus", in: Lenin, Werke, Vol. 23, Berlin 1964, p. 34.

- Concentration and bureaucratic centralization of all state executive power in a few hands;
- Extensive destruction of bourgeois legality, spread of lawless despotism, use of extrajudicial terror;
- Ban and ruthless persecution of the parties and other class organizations of the workers' movement (and possibly also the bourgeois parties except the fascist ones) until they are destroyed.

[77] These most important characteristics of fascist rule do not always and everywhere occur in the same way and to their full extent. However, in this combination they form a new quality that essentially distinguishes the fascist regime from bourgeois democracy - within the framework of the uniform bourgeois state type.

2. The preparation of the fascist dictatorship in Germany

In 1935, Dimitroff stated that "before the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, bourgeois governments generally pass through various stages and carry out a series of reactionary measures that prepare and directly promote the rise to power of fascism".¹¹ This can be clearly observed in the German version of fascism.

The fascist regime could already be prepared in the Weimar Republic, among other things, because the big-bourgeois forces striving for fascism were able to make use of certain external "normative" forms that had already been applied up to that point in order to stabilize the existing system of rule. This underlines the well-known fact that the content of a bourgeois order and its relationship to the established law cannot be explained merely in terms of the legal form as such, but that the course of the class struggle and the changes in the relationship of class power must always be taken into account. In 1933, the Weimar constitution had long since been abandoned, the parliamentary-democratic regime conceived in it had been gradually laid to rest, before the imperialist bourgeoisie stripped off the last shells of its dictatorship after the transfer of power to the fascists and the era of unlimited terror dawned.

The decisive weakness of the Weimar constitution was that the administrative and judicial apparatus - essentially the unchanged civil service and judicial bureaucracy of the old imperial state machinery - retained its de facto independence from parliament, the Reichstag. This state apparatus embodied the real political power of the imperialist bourgeoisie, which had been able to save its economic position with the help of the right-wing SPD and trade union leaders. In the event of a conflict between parliament and the executive, the latter had the upper hand - even under the constitution - through the right of the Reich President to dissolve the Reichstag (Art. 25 WV) and through his right to declare a state of emergency under Art. 48 WV, as well as through his supreme command over the entire Wehrmacht (Art. 47 WV).

What Lenin said about the capitalist state in general applies in full to the Weimar Republic: "There is not a single state, even the most democratic, where there are not loopholes or clauses in the constitution which secure for the bourgeoisie the possibility of using the military against the workers, imposing a state of siege, etc., 'in case of violations of peace and order' - in reality, however, when the exploited class 'violates' its slave existence and tries to stop behaving like a slave. etc."¹²

The "back doors" that were used were mainly the "enabling" legislation and the so-called dictatorship of the Reich President under Article 48 of the Constitution.

[78] Following the formal model of the "Enabling Act" of August 4, 1914, seven such laws were passed between 1919 and 1923. On the basis of these laws, the Reich government was declared authorized to issue "statutory ordinances", ordinances of the Reich government that were of far-reaching significance, in accordance with the broad purpose of the respective authorization

¹¹ Dimitroff, p. 95.

¹² Lenin, 'The Proletarian Revolution ... ' in: Lenin, Works, vol. 28, p. 243.

for the whole of social life, including the legal system. This practice was referred to as "simplified legislation".

This form of "governmental legislation"¹³ meant that the Weimar Constitution was largely at the disposal of the executive. Art. 68 ff. WV on legislation, including Art. 76 WV with its aggravating conditions for a constitutional amendment, were abdicated.

The practice of using an Enabling Act was suspended after 1923 until Hitler's fascism came to power. However, in the dictatorship of the Reich President under Article 48 of the Constitution, a method was available that was used to an even greater extent than the enabling legislation to deal with the deep crisis that was shaking the foundations of capitalism in Germany.

According to Art. 48 Para. 1 WV, the Reich President could use "armed force" to compel a country that "does not fulfill the duties incumbent upon it under the Reich Constitution or the Reich laws" to do so. According to Art. 48 para. 2 of the Constitution, the Reich President could, "if public security and order in the German Reich is seriously disturbed or endangered, take the measures necessary to restore public security and order, if necessary intervening with the aid of armed force". To this end, he was authorized to suspend a number of fundamental rights in whole or in part.

The formula "necessary measures" according to Art. 48 Para. 2 WV was interpreted to mean that the Reich President - and thus de facto the Reich government - had a general right to issue emergency decrees.¹⁴ Thus, not only through the enabling legislation, but also through Art. 48 WV, the government was granted the right to issue emergency decrees not provided for in the constitution. In all of this, it was still assumed that the President of the Reich could decide at his own discretion whether the conditions for measures under Art. 48 WV were met and which measures were necessary.

In the opinion of the Reichsgericht at the time, the "Reich dictatorship" under Art. 48 para. 2 WV gave the Reich President "a right, limited only by the content of the authorization and restrictable by the reserved Reich law, but otherwise completely unlimited and unrestricted, to enact all ... measures that appear necessary"¹⁵. The only limit was the Reich Constitution itself, which the Reich President could only override with regard to so-called fundamental rights. In reality, however, this dictatorship practice not only led to the suspension of fundamental rights, but also to the elimination of the Reichstag and other organs, in particular the Länder (according to Art. 17 ff. WV). A closer look at this practice reveals its constitution-destroying character. Under the presidency of [79] Friedrich Ebert (1919 to 1925), 136 ordinances were issued on the basis of Art. 48 WV. This was the legal lever used to suppress the actions of the working class in the revolutionary post-war crisis.

The forced dismantling of the bourgeois parliamentary regime during the great crisis of 1929 to 1932 was carried out using Art. 48 WV as a legal fig leaf. Article 48 of the Constitution was extended indefinitely. The measures originally intended to combat a "state of emergency" were replaced by measures that encompassed all areas of life and were calculated to be permanent, using this dictatorship provision as a pseudo-legal excuse. In 1930, Reich Chancellor Heinrich Brüning set about usurping the entire legislative process by means of Article 48 (2) of the Constitution. The following cabinets increasingly expanded this practice. The Reichstag was almost completely excluded from the legislative process. Despite many contradictions between them, the ruling parties represented in it were generally interested in having it "run down". It met 94 times in 1930, only 41 times in 1931 and only 13 times in 1932. Compared to five emergency decrees in accordance with Art. 48 Para. 2 WV, in 1930

¹³ Thus Ernst Rudolf Huber, *Quellen zum Staatsrecht der Neuzeit*, vol. 2, Tübingen 1951, p. 100.

¹⁴ See Fritz Poetzsch-Heffter, *Vom Staatsleben unter der Weimarer Verfassung* (vom 1. Januar 1920 bis 31. Dezember 1924), in: *JÖR*, vol. 13 (1925), Tübingen 1925, p. 206.

¹⁵ *Entscheidungen des Reichsgerichts in Strafsachen*, vol. 56, Berlin/Leipzig 1922, p. 189.

98 Reichstag Acts were passed; in 1931 there were already 44 emergency ordinances compared to 34 Reichstag Acts; finally, in 1932, 66 emergency ordinances were passed, but only five Reichstag Acts.¹⁶ The five laws passed in 1932 were not at all significant compared to the sometimes very extensive emergency ordinances.¹⁷ In addition to the emergency ordinances, which were predominantly economic in content and were used to launch an all-round attack on the standard of living of working people, there were also those intended to serve the political oppression and disenfranchisement of the working class. These included decrees to combat political "excesses" and the formation of special courts.

From 1930 to 1932, an authoritarian presidential dictatorship, the direct precursor to fascism, was thus firmly established. "The dictatorial 'governing with Art. 48' replaced the failing parliamentary legislation and formed the transition from the bourgeois constitutional state of the Weimar Republic to the National Socialist state of the present, which was oriented towards the fascist type of state," wrote one in fascist Germany in 1934.¹⁸ There is no question that this practice found no normative support in Article 48 of the Constitution, but that it was interpreted unconstitutionally. In this context, the fascist constitutional law expert Ulrich Scheuner spoke of the "legally creative extension of dictatorial power beyond its actual limits"¹⁹.

Developments from 1930 onwards vividly demonstrated the curtailed function of the bourgeois parliament within the authoritarian presidential regime based on the state's material means of power. According to Art. 48 para. 3 WV, the measures under Art. 48 para. 2 WV were to be suspended at the request of the Reichstag. Gerhard An-[80]schütz commented on this right of the Reichstag as follows: "Art. 48 para. 3 assigns the RT a control function that is unlimited in that it ... not only the legality, but also the necessity and usefulness of the measures subject to it."²⁰

However, as the Weimar period showed, this "unlimited control function" was a blunt weapon. As a result of the constant threat of dissolution - the only restriction on the possibility of dissolution through the formula "only once on the same occasion" proved to be a mere linguistic problem, namely finding other words for the same occasion - parliament could be effectively immobilized by the head of state.

On June 4, 1932, Hindenburg dissolved the Reichstag, which had been in existence for less than two years, with the

"justification" that this "no longer corresponds to the political will of the German people after the results of the elections to the state parliaments of the German states held in recent months". This was a clear partisanship for the Nazi Party, whose Reichstag faction had already tabled a motion at the beginning of May 1932 that the Reichstag should ask the Reich President to dissolve it. The subsequent elections on 31 July 1932 showed the continuation of the polarization process between the progressive forces on the one hand and the reactionary forces on the other. The Nazis had reached their peak with 13.7 million votes (37.4 percent), while on the other side the KPD was able to increase its number of votes to 5.3 million (14.6 percent). The SPD received 7.9 million votes (21.6 percent).

The newly elected Reichstag had barely constituted itself when it received the - long-programmed - order of dissolution from the Reich President on September 12, 1932. It was a novelty in German parliamentary history in that it was ordered before the Reichstag had even begun its scheduled agenda. This time the dissolution took place because, as Hin-

¹⁶ See Fritz Klein, Zur Vorbereitung der faschistischen Diktatur durch die deutsche Großbourgeoisie (1929-1932), in: ZfG, 6/1953, p. 891.

¹⁷ See Fritz Poetzsch-Heffter, Vom Staatsleben unter der Weimarer Verfassung, III. (letzter) Teil (vom 1. Januar 1929 bis 31. Januar 1933), in: JöR, Bd. 21(1933/34), Tübingen 191 p. 128.

¹⁸ Karl Schultes, Die Jurisprudenz zur Diktatur des Reichspräsidenten nach Art. 48 Abs. II der Weimarer Verfassung, Bonn 1934, p. V.

¹⁹ Ulrich Scheuner, Die nationale Revolution, in: Archiv des öffentlichen Rechts, Neue Folge, Vol. 24, Tübingen 1934, p. 284.

²⁰ Gerhard Anschütz, Die Verfassung des Deutschen Reichs vom 11. August 1919 (Commentary), Berlin 1933, p. 293.

denburg justified the order, "there is a danger that the Reichstag will demand the repeal of my emergency ordinance of Sept. 4. J. demands". While the dissolution of the Reichstag in 1930 had been motivated by the fact that the Reichstag *had* made use of its right of control over the presidential emergency decrees, this new dissolution was motivated by the fact that it *could* make use of this constitutional competence. This was a clear rejection of the parliamentary principle enshrined in the Weimar Constitution.

However, the Reichstag elections on November 6, 1932 did not help to consolidate the political situation in favor of the reaction. On the contrary, the Nazi Party lost two million votes (down from 37.4 to 33.1 percent), while the KPD gained 0.7 million votes (up from 14.6 to 16.9 percent). The election results showed that the sections of the population that had been misled by rampant demagoguery, mainly the members of the middle classes who were suffering badly from the economic crisis, were beginning to turn away from the fascists.

The Papen government had initially remained in office despite the newly elected Reichstag and had thus once again demonstrated its ignorance of parliament. However, as it was unable to find a majority in the Reichstag that would tolerate it and to cope with the intensifying domestic political contradictions - to which the wave of strikes that began in September [81] 1932 and extended over several months against the further deterioration of the social situation of the workers made a decisive contribution - Papen had to resign on November 17, 1932.

In view of the differences between the individual factions of the ruling class, the "solution" of handing over the government to the Hitler fascists was not reached at first. It was only when the Schleicher government, which, like the Papen government, had come into being independently of parliament, failed after barely two months in office that Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor on January 30, 1933.

On February 1, 1933, the Reich President dissolved the Reichstag. The justification for the dissolution decree indicated that the final phase in the destruction of bourgeois parliamentarianism under the Weimar Constitution had been reached: "Since the formation of a working majority has proved impossible, I am dissolving the Reichstag on the basis of Article 25 of the Reich Constitution so that the German people can take a position on the newly formed government of national unification by electing a new Reichstag."²¹

The relationship between parliament and government had now been completely reversed. Instead of forming a government on the basis of the parliamentary constellation, the formation of parliament was now deemed necessary depending on the formation of a government that had already taken place. Instead of the confidence of the Reichstag, which the government was entitled to according to Article 54 of the Constitution, the "confidence" of the government in a parliament was to take its place, and the voters were to ensure that it was composed accordingly.

The transition phase from Weimar bourgeois democracy to the "thousand-year Reich" of fascism thus came to an end. The authoritarian presidential regime had fulfilled its pro-fascist function.

3. The establishment of the fascist regime

As a rule, two stages can be distinguished in the transformation of the state mechanism of rule on a fascist basis.²² The first stage is usually characterized by changes in the forms of activity and in the cadre of the state organs. There are usually no abrupt structural changes in the system of state organs. The reactionary tendencies in the exercise of power, inherent in all imperialist states, suddenly and rapidly intensify. Repressive measures against the working class and its organizations, the harsh violation of the democratic rights and freedoms of citizens take on extreme forms. The incarceration of political opponents and their physical liquidation take on a qualitatively new dimension.

²¹ RGB1. 1933/I, p. 45; "Decree of the Reich President on the dissolution of the Reichstag", dated February 1, 1933.

²² See the following Ju. I. Avdeev/V. N. Strunnikov, *Buržuaznoe gosudarstvo v period 1918 do 1939*, Moscow 1962, p. 299 ff.

without even formally fulfilling any criminal offenses, take on a mass character and become a system. The authority of parliament continues to decline. The dominance of the executive institutions, above all their top echelons, is growing rapidly. The disregard for the constitution, for civic legality as a whole, takes on a new quality.

[82] In the second stage of the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, bourgeois democracy and bourgeois legality in the broad sense are usually negated. The fascist state experiences its full manifestation. Any remaining remnants of bourgeois parliamentarianism disappear or sink to a mere backdrop. New, extremely reactionary state organs are created, as is a new constitutional law. The open arbitrariness, the terror against political dissidents is running at full speed, the elimination of the population from political life, their political lawlessness, is being perfected. The concentration of power in a few hands is being completed. The interference of the imperialist state in all areas of social life takes on new dimensions. The "nationalization" of the fascist party and other fascist organizations, their direct integration into the state apparatus, into the direct exercise of power, became the rule. This gives the terror exercised by them the appearance of legality. At the same time, their inclusion is linked to an expansion of the state mechanism.

Of course, this division into two stages should not be applied schematically. How the fascist state reorganization takes place in the respective countries in detail, what concrete forms it takes, to what extent it may exclude certain areas from total subjugation to the bureaucratic-dictatorial coercive power, how long the stages of state reorganization take - all this depends on various circumstances. The specific political characteristics of the pre-fascist period are essential for the course of this process. These usually have a considerable influence on the way in which the fascist system is established, on the speed and thoroughness of the transformation of the state apparatus, on the methods of suppressing political opponents, on the consolidation of the political power of the most reactionary forces of monopoly capital.

The degree of development of capitalist production relations and, above all, the weight of monopoly capital in the economic life of a country have a major impact on the fascist state organization. In fascist Germany, it became the rule that the monopoly associations intervened directly in the exercise of power and took over state tasks of economic regulation. In less capitalistically developed states, where the weight of monopoly capital is considerably weaker than that of the large agrarians, such a special economic management apparatus controlled directly by the monopolies did not develop.

In fascist Italy and fascist Germany, the stages of state transformation were similar in terms of content. However, they differed in their pace. In Italy, the first stage lasted from the end of 1922 to the end of 1924. In Germany, the first stage lasted from February 1933 to July 1933.²³ In contrast to Italy, the rapid progress of the initial stage in Germany resulted from the relatively long preparatory process of the presidential dictatorship (1930 to 1933), which had prepared all the conditions for the far-reaching change in state structure and state action. Above all, the extensive agreement finally reached among the most reactionary circles of the monopoly bourgeoisie on the course to be taken in domestic and foreign policy was of decisive importance. This included the unconditional reckoning with the revolutionary workers' movement as well as the consistent course towards a new war, through which the Soviet Union was to be defeated and the results of the First World War corrected.

The political situation that had arisen in Germany made it possible to bring about a complete change in the form of the bourgeois state in Germany under the guise of external constitutional continuity, under the appearance of a mere change of government. The total break with

²³ "Within five months, a change in political conditions had occurred in Germany that even the bold prophets of fascism had not predicted" (Erich Paterna et al., *Deutschland von 1933 bis 1939*, Berlin 1969, p. 46).

of the previous form of government was understood and wanted by all the main players involved. To mislead the masses, they spoke of a "German revolution", of a "national uprising". Carl Schmitt, one of the leading legal-theoretical pioneers of the Nazi empire, wrote: "The German revolution was legal, i.e. formally correct according to the former constitution. It was so because of discipline and the German sense of order ... It would be legally wrong and politically an act of sabotage to infer from this kind of legality a continued validity of overcome legal ideas, institutions or norms and thus a continued submission to the letter or the spirit of the Weimar Constitution."²⁴ This argumentation is also a kind of "submission", it is intellectual complicity in the creation and stabilization of a regime of inhumanity.

One day after the Reichstag fire staged by the Nazis, on February 28, 1933, on the basis of Art. 48 Para. 2 of the Constitution "to ward off communist acts of violence endangering the state", the "Ordinance for the Protection of the People and the State"²⁵, paragraph 1 of which declared restrictions on personal freedom, freedom of opinion and the press, the right of association and assembly, interference with the secrecy of correspondence, post, telegraph and telephone, orders for house searches and confiscations as well as restrictions on property "even outside the statutory limits otherwise specified for this purpose" to be permissible. These fundamental rights enumerated in the Weimar Constitution were "suspended until further notice", at least according to paragraph 1 of this decree.

The decree of February 28, 1933, which remained in force until the collapse of the Hitler regime in 1945, documented - not outwardly recognizable to everyone - that the permanent state of emergency had begun. It was a state of emergency which, in its effects on workers, went far beyond the terror that had been exercised against the forces of progress in the Weimar Republic. Contrary to its ostensible purpose, the decree was not only directed against communists, but rather against anyone who was somehow suspected of being an opponent of fascism.²⁶ The system of concentration camps was established on its basis.

[84] The Nazi jurist Werner Best, at the time SS-Oberführer, wrote on paragraph 1 of the "Reichstag Fire Decree": "After the removal of all existing legal barriers, it is thus taken for granted that the responsible state institutions - above all the police - have to take the necessary measures in direct application of state authority without any norms."²⁷ This was the undisguised statement of the fact that the terror to be exercised no longer knew any legal limits, but could be exercised "without norms", i.e. lawlessly.

The situation was not much different with the second seemingly legal main instrument for strengthening the fascist dictatorship, the Enabling Act of March 24, 1933.²⁸ Although outwardly based on the practice of the Weimar period, in its consequences it meant the legalistic, final elimination of the bourgeois parliamentary system of rule in Germany for the next twelve years.

In order to have a completely free hand in the implementation of fascist policy both internally and externally, unhindered by parliamentary difficulties, Hitler sought such an Enabling Act, which freed him from being bound by Article 48 of the Constitution. The two-thirds majority required for this

²⁴ Carl Schmitt, *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, Hamburg 1933, p. 8.

²⁵ RGBI. 1933/I, p. 83; "Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of the People and the State", dated February 28, 1933.

²⁶ In a circular issued by the Prussian Minister of the Interior (Göring) on March 3, 1933, it is stated that the extended measures permitted under the ordinance are primarily directed against the Communists, "but must then also be directed against those who collaborate with the Communists and support or promote their criminal aims, even if only indirectly". This circular decree also expressly states that not only the articles of fundamental rights listed in paragraph 1 of the ordinance are suspended, but that the aforementioned paragraph "also abolishes all other restrictions imposed by Reich and state law on the activities of the police in the aforementioned areas, insofar as it is expedient to achieve the [84] objective pursued by the ordinance. (Runderlaß des MdI. vom 3.3.1933 - II 1121, Ministerialblatt für die Preußische innere Verwaltung I, 1933, p. 233).

²⁷ Werner Best, *Erneuerung des Polizeirechts*, in: *Kriminalistik*, 2/1938, p. 28.

²⁸ RGBI. 1933/I, p. 141; "Gesetz zur Behebung der Not von Volk und Reich", dated March 24, 1933.

In view of the "constitution-amending" nature of the planned law (Art. 76 WV), the fascists managed to obtain the immunity of the Reichstag deputies by persecuting and arresting all 81 elected communist Reichstag deputies immediately after the elections of March 5, 1933, disregarding their immunity as deputies (Art. 37 WV). Although they were included in the official list of Reichstag members, they were not even invited to the Reichstag session, contrary to Article 20 of the Constitution. All of this happened long before the "Provisional Act on the Alignment of the Länder with the Reich" of March 31, 1933²⁹, which was passed on the basis of the Ermächtigungsgesetz, subsequently declared the "allocation of seats to Communist Party election proposals for the Reichstag and the Prussian Landtag on the basis of the election results of March 5" to be "invalid" (paragraph 10).

At the same time, the Reichstag's rules of procedure were amended to the effect that all members who were absent "through no fault of their own" could be faked as being present.³⁰ This clumsy, unconstitutional trick was intended to prevent from the outset the absence of the SPD, for example, from rendering the Reichstag incapable of passing resolutions. The missing deputies could have been declared present without further ado.

In the vote on the Enabling Act, the 441 MPs from all bourgeois parties voted in favor and only the 94 SPD MPs present - out of a total of 120 (several of whom had also been arrested) - voted against.³¹ Many of the bourgeois members of parliament at the time, who incurred serious [85] guilt towards the German people and other nations by agreeing to Hitler's terror practices, returned to high and highest office in the FRG after 1945, for example the late Federal President Theodor Heuß.

The "Act to Remedy the Distress of the People and the Reich" authorized the Reich government - and this went far beyond the authorization practice practiced in the Weimar Republic - to pass not only ordinances representing the law, as had previously been the case, but even Reich laws. In addition, with the exception of the establishment of the Reichstag and the Reichsrat as well as the rights of the Reich President, these could also amend the constitution. This meant that the imperial government also had the function of constitutional legislator. The executive had seemingly become the unrestricted holder of state power.

From their point of view, the fascist constitutional law scholars logically referred to this "law" as a "provisional constitution"³². Ernst Rudolf Huber, then a professor in Leipzig, wrote:

"This law to remedy the plight of the people and the Reich is not an enabling law in the old sense ... It is not an exceptional regulation and a break with an old system that continues to exist in principle. It contains within itself the basic features of a new independent order, which not only 'breaks through' the old system, but completely tears it down and destroys it. It is the first fundamental law of the new empire ... Its centerpiece is the unification of the legislative and executive powers in one hand. This is an act of secular significance, in which the entire Western constitutional development since Montesquieu is negated, in which the concept of the constitutional state of the 19th century is destroyed."³³ The previously valid bourgeois concept of law had now lost all justification.³⁴ Even the adoption of the annual budget by law and the approval of loans were no longer even formally left to parliament.

The Reichstag, soon composed only of fascists, extended the Enabling Act by four years in 1937 and 1939 (after the "Anschluss" of Austria). Finally, in 1943

²⁹ Ibid., p. 153; "Provisional Act on the Gleichschaltung of the Länder with the Reich", dated March 11, 1933.

³⁰ See Karl Dietrich Bracher/Wolfgang Sauer/Gerhard Schulz, *Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung*, Cologne/Opla- den 1960, p. 152 f.

³¹ For details, see *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. 5, Berlin 1966, p. 28 f.

³² Schmitt, *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, p. 6.

³³ Ernst Rudolf Huber, *Verfassungsrecht des Großdeutschen Reiches*, Hamburg 1939, p. 43.

³⁴ "As an act of leadership, the law takes on a completely new meaning in the system of origin thinking. It is no longer essentially a general abstract norm, but a supreme national value" (Gustav Adolf Walz, *Artgleichheit gegen Gleichartigkeit*, Hamburg 1938, p. 42).

the "Führer" himself "determined" the indefinite continuation of this empowerment.³⁵ This act of self-empowerment completes the picture of that unsurpassable disregard for even the last remnants of bourgeois legality.

With reference to the Reichstag Fire Decree of February 28, 1933 and the Enabling Act of March 24, 1933, the complete dismantling of civic democracy was carried out in rapid succession over the next few months. According to the Weimar Constitution, the German Reich was a federal state in which the individual constituent states (Länder) possessed relative independence and acted in state affairs on the basis of their own state constitutions (Art. 5 WV). Although the primacy of imperial power over state power was postulated at the same time (Art. 13 WV), the states retained a great deal of leeway for their own initiative in shaping social and political life.

After the Reichstag elections of March 5, 1933, Reichskommissare were immediately appointed, based on the Reichstag Fire Decree, everywhere in the states where the government was not yet in [86] the hands of the fascists. This was the case in nine out of 17 countries. The "process of denationalization of the Länder"³⁷ continued with the Provisional Gleichschaltung Act of 31 March 1933 and the "Second Act on the Gleichschaltung of the Länder with the Reich" of 7 April 1933 (Reich Governor Act)³⁶.

The state governments (Reichskommissare) were given the right to pass state laws, analogous to the regulation for the Reich government. Furthermore, the state parliaments were dissolved and "reassembled" without further ado according to the votes cast in the Reichstag elections on March 5, 1933. The seats to which the Communists were entitled were "not allocated". The same procedure was followed for the municipal councils. The Reich governors appointed in the provinces were given the right to appoint and dismiss the provincial governments, as well as civil servants and judges. This was an important step towards the complete unitarization of the Reich on a fascist basis. There was now no more room for a front coming from the provinces. All political posts were occupied by followers of the NSDAP.

On April 7, 1933, the "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" was passed at the same time.³⁸ This law was intended to enable the entire executive apparatus at all levels of state activity, i.e. the Reich, state and municipal authorities, to be completely aligned with the fascist order in terms of personnel without exception. According to paragraph 4 of the law, "civil servants whose previous activities do not guarantee that they will at all times unreservedly support the national state" could be dismissed from their posts. Workers and employees of public institutions were also covered by the law. It was primarily Communists, Social Democrats and citizens of Jewish origin who belonged to the circle of those reprimanded. Many of them were sent to concentration camps and murdered. The wording of the law also allowed for the removal of disliked civil servants.

However, the effects of the law went far beyond the state sector. "The law has ... served as a model for the liberal professions and private companies to purge their staff of Jews and Marxists", according to a fascist treatise.³⁹ Thousands of doctors, lawyers, actors, artists, teachers at schools and universities lost their jobs as a result.⁴⁰ The principle of equality contained in the Weimar Constitution (Art. 109 Para. 1) was thus invalidated once again.

³⁵ RGBI. 1943/I, p. 295; "Decree of the Führer on Government Legislation", dated May 10, 1943.

³⁶ Ibid., 1933/I, p. 173; "Zweites Gesetz zur Gleichschaltung der Länder mit dem Reich", dated April 7, 1933.

³⁷ Thus Fritz Poetzsch-Heffter et al, Vom Deutschen Staatsleben (vom 30. Januar bis 31. Dezember 1933), in: JöR, vol. 22 (1935), Tübingen 1935, p. 265.

³⁸ RGBI. 1933/I, p. 175; "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service", dated April 7, 1933.

³⁹ Wilhelm Stuckart/Wilhelm Albrecht/Rolf Schiedermaier, Neues Staatsrecht I. Der neue Staatsaufbau, Neugestaltung von Recht und Wirtschaft, 13th ed., 1st part, Leipzig 1940, p. 24.

⁴⁰ See in detail Paterna et al, p. 35 f.

The decisions to ban civil servants in the Federal Republic of Germany and the way in which they are practiced are a notorious example of this. The extent to which the "unresolved past" continues to have an effect can be seen in the wording of the Minister Presidential Decree of January 28, 1972⁴¹, according to which only civil servants may be appointed,

"whoever offers the guarantee that he will at all times stand up for the [87] free democratic basic order in the sense of the Basic Law". The linguistic proximity - and not only this - to paragraph 4 of the Nazi Civil Service Act of 1933 cannot be overlooked.⁴²

The "destruction of the party state under constitutional law"⁴³, the banning, persecution or self-dissolution of all parties except the NSDAP, also belongs in this context. The KPD and its members were subjected to the worst terror on the basis of the Reichstag Fire Decree of February 28, 1933, without an explicit ban having been issued. On May 26, 1933, a "Law on the Confiscation of Communist Property" was passed⁴⁴.

The illusion of social democratic leaders that they could avoid the same fate through a "course of legality", through the tactic of appeasement, was doomed to failure. On May 10, the SPD party buildings were occupied and its newspapers and assets confiscated. Nevertheless, on 17 May 1933, 65 members of the SPD in the Reichstag, together with representatives of all the bourgeois parties, voted for the Nazi government's foreign policy program. But on

On June 22, 1933, the SPD was banned on the basis of the Reichstag Fire Decree and a large number of its functionaries were imprisoned. The exercise of parliamentary mandates in all representative bodies was "excluded".⁴⁵

In the following days, all bourgeois parties except the NSDAP dissolved themselves. This affected the German State Party, whose seats were withdrawn because they had been elected on the basis of SPD election proposals⁴⁶; the Centre Party, the Bavarian People's Party and the German People's Party, parties that were able to allow their Reichstag deputies to continue to serve as so-called guest members of the NSDAP's Reichstag faction by agreement. The same happened with the German National People's Party, whose leader Hugenberg was represented in the cabinet until June 27, 1933. A number of the German National leaders had already converted to the NSDAP beforehand. All the bourgeois parties mentioned had more or less voluntarily decided to give themselves up. They had done so without taking the opportunity to protest publicly. Without exception, they submitted to the fascist dictatorship; indeed, some of them explicitly recommended that their members join the Nazi party.

In the meantime, the German monopoly bourgeoisie had fully backed the Nazi Party and withdrawn its support from all other bourgeois parties. The most visible expression of this was the Adolf Hitler donation proposed by the chairman of the Reich Association of German Industry, Gustav Krupp, on May 30, 1933, for the permanent support of the Nazi Party. On the basis of this proposal, over 700 million RM were paid out over the course of the twelve years of fascist dictatorship with the participation of the "widest circles of the German economy, including agriculture and the banking world".⁴⁷ [88] In the meantime, these circles had become convinced that the fascist leadership, as their compliant instrument, was best prepared and able to brutally suppress all anti-monopolistic demands from the working population, not least from their own petty-bourgeois followers, and on the other hand to fulfill the demands of the exploiters. The appointment of a "General Council of the German Economy" by Hitler on July 15, 1933 on the one hand and demagogic declarations by the Nazi leadership at the same time about "ending

⁴¹ Wortlaut und Kritik der verfassungswidrigen Januarbeschlüsse, Cologne 1972, p. 6; Grundsätze zur Frage der verfassungs- feindlichen Kräfte im öffentlichen Dienst of January 28, 1972.

⁴² See Ernst Gottschling, Berufsverbote gegen Demokraten in der BRD, in: Neue Justiz, 15/1975, p. 457 f.

⁴³ Otto Koellreutter, Deutsches Verfassungsrecht, Berlin 1936, p. 105.

⁴⁴ RGBI. 1933/I, p. 293; "Law on the Inclusion of Communist Assets", dated May 26, 1933.

⁴⁵ See Reinhard Kühnl, Der deutsche Faschismus in Quellen und Dokumenten, Cologne 1975, 46 pp. 198 f.

⁴⁶ See RGBI. 1933/I, p. 462; "Verordnung zur Sicherung der Staatsführung", of 7.7.1933.

⁴⁷ See History of the German Labor Movement, vol. 5, p. 451 f., p. 56.

of the German revolution", on the other hand, form the political-ideological background for the self-liquidation of the bourgeois parties except the Nazi-fascist one.

In a letter to Reich governors and state governments dated July 11, 1933, Reich Interior Minister Frick declared that the "German revolution" was complete: "The National Socialist German Workers' Party has ... become the sole bearer of the state. All the power of this state lies in the hands of the Reich government, led by the Reich Chancellor alone, in which all decisive offices are occupied by reliable National Socialists. The victorious German revolution has thus entered the stage of evolution, i.e. normal, lawful reconstruction work."⁴⁸

The two-paragraph "Law against the formation of new parties"⁴⁹ enacted on 14 July 1933 therefore only sealed the end of the semblance of a political party after the ban and cruel suppression of the KPD and SPD, along with all other organizations of the workers' movement.

"pluralistic" bourgeois party landscape. It succinctly announced that the "only political party" left was the NSDAP. Maintaining the organizational cohesion of another party or forming a new party was threatened with imprisonment for up to three years. This government law already violated the restriction contained in the Enabling Act of March 24, 1933, that "not the institution of the Reichstag as such" may be affected. Arnold Köttgen wrote in 1938 that "the parliamentary Reichstag in the sense of the Weimar Constitution" had been "deprived of its constitutional basis" with this law.⁵⁰ With the Reichstag now composed solely of representatives of the Nazi Party and a few "guests", the Reichstag, as it had come into being as an institution even in the terror elections of March 5, 1933, namely from representatives of various parties, no longer even formally existed. By agreeing to the Enabling Act, all the other bourgeois parties had themselves contributed to the avalanche of fascist anti-parliamentarism that was now burying them.

The immediate consequence of this for the forms of exercising power was as follows: According to the Enabling Act, the Reich government was also allowed to deviate from the constitution, with the exception of the regulations concerning the Reichstag, the Reichsrat and the rights of the Reich President. The composition of the Reichstag, which was made up exclusively of fascist party members, made it possible to formally pass constitutional amendments via the three Reich bodies mentioned above, which had previously been excluded, by a two-thirds majority or even unanimously, while maintaining the appearance of legality. How this was used remains to be seen.

[89] Leaving aside the demagogic revolutionary and evolutionary rhetoric of the quoted Frick circular, its content nevertheless reveals that the first stage of the establishment of the fascist regime was also completed in the understanding of its main actors. With the exception of the office of Reich President, the fascists had taken possession of all command positions in the legislative and executive spheres.

In view of the functioning of the extrajudicial terror apparatus, there was no urgent need to make radical changes in the judiciary once the limited number of "Marxists" and "Jews" working there had been removed. The vast majority of judges and public prosecutors had already sufficiently demonstrated their obedience to the interests of capital during the Weimar Republic. To the bitter end, they diligently delivered their share of the oppression of their own and other peoples. Thousands fell victim to their blood justice.

Thus, the monopoly capitalist clients and financiers of the Nazi Party could be satisfied with the results of the first stage of the establishment of fascism in Germany. The

⁴⁸ The circular is reprinted in Poetzsch-Heffter et al, p. 24 f.

⁴⁹ RGBl. 1933/I, p. 479; "Law against the formation of new parties", dated July 14, 1933.

⁵⁰ Arnold Köttgen, Vom Deutschen Staatsleben (vom 1. Januar 1934 bis zum 30. September 1937); in: JöR, vol. 24 (1937), Tübingen 1938, p. 77.

The danger of any truly revolutionary development seemed to have been banished once and for all. The "thousand-year empire" of undisturbed profit-making seemed to have begun. Now it was a matter of extending the results achieved in the next stage, striving to consolidate and stabilize political conditions in order to be able to resume the struggle for the redivision of the world and put an end to the first country of socialism.

4. The expansion of the dictatorship into a "völkisch leader state"

Frick's quoted statement that the NSDAP had become "the sole bearer of the state" reflects the tendency, particularly characteristic of fascist regimes, to "unify" all social and political forms of organization of the ruling class. The exploited classes and strata are in any case denied the legal organization of their interests. The economic power of the most reactionary forces of monopoly capital is to be implemented without any frictional losses, without allowing any serious opposition within its own ranks. However, this collides with the laws of class struggle, so that this line can never be fully realized. Contradictions constantly break out within the organizations, which are usually very heterogeneous in terms of their membership and run counter to the intended purpose. Nevertheless, in the transformation of the will of the economically powerful into the will of the state, this bundling of the spectrum of socio-political forms of organization can, with an appropriate constellation, bring about a temporarily stronger "alignment" in the interests of monopoly capitalism. Italy, Germany and Spain have provided examples of this in their fascist stage.

This motivation is vividly illustrated in Carl Schmitt's book "Staat, Bewegung, Volk. The Threefold Structure of Political Unity" by Carl Schmitt. Even the order of the three words in the title is remarkable. In the "political unity" brought about by coercion, which is only ever a wishful thinking in a capitalist society torn apart by antagonistic class contradictions, the state ranks first as the main instrument for exercising power, followed by the "movement", and lastly the "people".

"People", which [90] Schmitt regards as "the *apolitical* side growing in the protection and shadow of political decisions".⁵¹ A specialist in questions of "movement" interprets this pejorative assessment laconically: "The non-political sphere of triviality is left to the people"; he deduces from this that "an organizational problem exists only between party and state".⁵²

In line with the objective of unconditionally subjugating the entire people to the profit interests of the exploiters through forced political integration, the term "movement" was used in fascist Germany in a very broad sense. The Nazi Party was claimed to be "the organized popular movement of the National Socialist world view and as such the unifying bond of the national community".⁵³ For this reason, the SA and SS, the Nazi Motorists' Corps, the Hitler Youth, the Nazi Student Association, the Nazi Lecturers' Association, the Nazi Women's Association were also counted as branches of the fascist party, as were organizations such as the German Labour Front, the Nazi German Medical Association, the Nazi Teachers' Association, the Nazi Association of German Technicians and the Nazi People's Welfare Association as "affiliated associations".⁵⁴ Finally, there were also so-called supervised organizations (NS-Reichskriegerbund and NS-Reichsbund für Leibesübungen).

For the fascist leadership in Germany, there were two important tasks that had to be solved in the second stage of the expansion of the system of rule that began in mid-1933. On the one hand, it was important to consolidate the influence of the fascist party on the state apparatus; on the other hand, the claims coming from the "movement" to take the former programmatically proclaimed "German socialism" seriously had to be fended off. In the sense of such a

⁵¹ Schmitt, Staat, Bewegung, Volk, p. 12.

⁵² Gottfried Neeße, Partei und Staat, in: Der deutsche Staat der Gegenwart, H. 20, Hamburg 1936, p. 21.

⁵³ Stuckart/Albrecht/Schiedermaier, p. 35.

⁵⁴ RGBl. 1935/I, p. 502; "Ordinance on the Implementation of the Law to Secure the Unity of Party and State", dated March 29, 1935, §§ 2, 3.

To "constitutionalize" the relationship between the fascist party and the imperialist state, the "Law to Secure the Unity of Party and State" was passed on 1 December 1933⁵⁵. The NSDAP was presented as the "bearer of the idea of the state and indissolubly linked to the state" (Paragraph 1). To "ensure the closest possible cooperation" between the NSDAP and the public authorities, Hitler's party deputy, Rudolf Hess, and the SA chief of staff, Ernst Röhm, were appointed members of the Reich government (Paragraph 2). In general, the principle of personal union was applied, starting with Hitler as Reich Chancellor and "leader" of the NSDAP. Goebbels was both Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda and Reich Propaganda Director of the NSDAP. At the middle level, the Reich Governors and the Prussian Chief Presidents almost always held the position of Gauleiter of the Nazi Party at the same time. At the local level, according to the "German Municipal Code" of 30 January 1935⁵⁶, a special office of the Nazi Party, namely the "Commissioner of the NSDAP", ensured that bureaucratic centralism was implemented down to the last village. This commissioner was involved in all important matters - such as the appointment and dismissal of the mayor and the so-called deputies.

[91] The "unity" of fascist party and state was of particular importance in the practice of terror against political opponents, in the expansion of the entire apparatus of repression. From the very beginning of the Nazi dictatorship, the actions of the SA and SS against the working class and its organizations were not only approved, murders were not only condoned, but the SA and SS were officially deployed as "auxiliary police" in the first six months. The first concentration camps were also set up by the SA and later taken over by the SS. The tendency to merge fascist terror organizations and state repression mechanisms led to the police apparatus gradually merging completely with the SS.⁵⁷

In this context, the term "SS state", which is increasingly being used by historians and political scientists in the FRG to characterize the fascist German state as a whole, must be critically evaluated. This can give rise to misconceptions that are likely to distract from the class-based foundations of the fascist system of rule. German imperialism and the German monopoly capital are then no longer responsible for the war and millions of genocides, not capitalism as a social system, but solely "the SS". Broszat says of the armed SS units, for example, that they were "the characteristic example of a special power that was based on party *and* state, but had detached itself from both and had become independent".⁵⁸ This thesis favors the impression that the monopoly capitalist relations of power and domination had little or nothing to do with the "special power" apostrophized by Broszat. The theoretical error of this type of argumentation consists in the fact that the relative independence which the state, like every other component of the imperialist political system, possesses within the framework of the specific ruling functions it has to fulfill, is "exaggerated", made absolute in the case of the SS. The isolation of a part of the superstructure, the "detachment" from it, also has the consequence that the interdependencies between its numerous parts, that the systemic character of the superstructure, its complexity, are lost.

With the formula of the "unity" between fascist party and state, the question of primacy in this relationship was deliberately left open. However, the fascist constitutional law expert Koellreutter clearly stated the situation in 1936: "According to the National Socialist view, the state is the political and constitutional form of life of the people. The party must also be integrated into it."⁵⁹ The imperialist bourgeoisie makes use of the most diverse party foundations for its political purposes. Sometimes it relies on the one, then again on the other.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1933/I, p. 1016; "Law to secure the unity of party and state", of December 1, 1933.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1935/I, p. 49; "Deutsche Gemeindeordnung", dated January 30, 1935.

⁵⁷ See in detail the article by Klaus Drobisch in this volume, p. 157 ff.

⁵⁸ Martin Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers*, Munich 1969, p. 339.

⁵⁹ Koellreutter, p. 154.

the others, or it dispenses with such a political instrument altogether. Change and mobility therefore prevail here. However, it can never do without its main instrument for exercising and maintaining its power, the state, even if this changes its forms depending on the class struggle in individual cases.

This is why the ruling circles of monopoly capital were so keen to keep the "National Socialist revolution" free of undesirable effects, uncontrolled actions against the exploited property and against the "state authority". In the aforementioned circular from the beginning of July 1933, Frick resolutely opposed those who spoke of a "continuation of the revolution or a second revolution". "Any attempt to sabotage the German revolution, as can be seen in particular in unauthorized interventions in the economy and in disregarding the orders of the bearers of state authority, must therefore ... be punished with the most severe measures against whomever."

This was unmistakably aimed at all those forces in the "movement" itself who, relying on demagogically whipped up expectations that everything would be better than it had been in the "system era", now demanded that all the promises be kept. The mass supporters of the Nazi Party were increasingly disappointed in their hopes of economic betterment. Dissatisfaction grew, intensified by the growing resistance of the working class to increased exploitation. As a result, the not unjustified concern of the monopolists grew that the slogans about "revolution" and "German socialism" proclaimed by the Nazi leaders to mislead the masses could take on an anti-monopolistic edge and trigger a genuine mass movement against their economic and political positions that could no longer be channeled. This explains the massive tone of the circular, which threatened to apply the Reichstag Fire Decree of February 28, 1933, which, as is well known, was used as a legal instrument to persecute the Communists.

On June 30, 1934, the backbone of the opposition within his own ranks was broken under pressure from monopoly capital and with the help of the Reichswehr. Hitler had the mass murder of his own vassals and other disliked persons declared "lawful" by a "Law on Measures of State Defense" of July 3, 1934⁶⁰. A judicial investigation into the "German St. Bartholomew's Night" was ruled out once and for all. Carl Schmitt rushed to provide a theoretical alibi for the murder campaign in an essay entitled "The Führer protects the law" published on August 1, 1934. He wrote: "The Führer protects the law from the worst abuses when, in the moment of danger, he, by virtue of his leadership as supreme ruler, directly creates justice."⁶¹ The mere invention of the title "supreme court ruler", which even under the conditions of the time was without any legal basis, was enough to pass off Hitler's massacre as an outgrowth of the law, created by himself.

Like Schmitt, the majority of bourgeois German legal scholars contributed with their pseudo-scientific constructions to the justification of a reign of terror the likes of which the world had never seen before. Most of them returned to office in the FRG after 1945.

How did the supreme organs of the state develop from mid-1933? How did the relationship between the Reichstag, Reich Chancellor, Reich Government and Reich President develop? What became of the relationship between the state as a whole and the constituent states, between the power of the Reich and the power of the Länder? The Reichstag had not passed any more laws since the adoption of the Enabling Act on March 23, 1933. It was dissolved in October 1933 and "re-elected" on November 12, 1933, combined with a referendum against the Treaty of Versailles. More than ten percent of those eligible to vote expressed their protest against the fascist regime by rejecting the "NSDAP district election proposals" or staying away from the sham election. Of the

⁶⁰ RGB1. 1934/I, p. 529; "Gesetz über Maßnahmen der Staatsnotwehr", of July 3, 1934.

⁶¹ Carl Schmitt, Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar-Geneva-Versailles 1923-1939, Hamburg 1940, p. 200.

661 members of the [93] new Reichstag, 639 belonged to the Nazi Party, the remaining 22 were renowned representatives of the dissolved bourgeois parties and big business.

The only thing this Reichstag had in common with the one from the Weimar Republic was its name. It was a "completely new entity",⁶² wrote a fascist constitutional lawyer. The "suppression of the The 'election' by the 'plebiscite' naturally also fundamentally changed the nature of the Reichstag as a political institution".⁶³ Or so the official doctrine of constitutional law proclaimed. The Reichstag had degenerated into a mere acclamation body, if it was convened at all - very rarely. It was defined as an "assembly of politically proven personalities who were to lend the decisions of the leadership special weight both internally and externally through their approval".⁶⁴ The Reichstag was granted neither legislative nor conciliatory powers vis-à-vis the government. Its existence was limited to the exercise of mere façade functions. The widespread expression about the largest and most expensive "choral society" hit the mark. This was the dummy and caricature of a bourgeois parliament. Opportunity considerations alone were therefore the deciding factor when laws were exceptionally "passed" by the Reichstag. However, the interpretation was that such decisions on laws were not "parliamentary resolutions in the old sense".⁶⁵ Such acts of demonstration were essentially limited to the "Law on the Reconstruction of the Reich" of January 30, 1934⁶⁶ and the infamous Nuremberg Race Laws of September 1935.⁶⁷

In the course of the centralization efforts, the "Reconstruction Act" marked the decisive step towards the final elimination of the autonomy of the federal states. The state parliaments were abolished, the sovereign rights of the states were transferred to the Reich and the state governments were subordinated to the Reich government. Germany had ceased to be a federal state. It had become a fascist unitary state. Although the federal states continued to exist in terms of territory, the Reich was now the sole holder of state sovereignty. The state governments became so-called indirect Reich authorities, i.e. administrative bodies of the Reich. They were fully subject to the Reich government's authority to issue directives and supervise officials. However, the imperial reform aimed at by right-wing circles during the Weimar period with the aim of completely reorganizing the Reich did not come about. Prussia's traditional special position was preserved to a certain extent. The territories "newly won" through the policy of aggression were divided into "Reichsgaue" (Austria was divided into seven Reichsgaue) or incorporated as a whole under this name (Sudetengau), unless formal incorporation under constitutional law was "postponed", as was the case with Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg. The rigorous subjugation to the fascist "imperial power" was fully assured with one label or the other.

The "Reconstruction Act" provided an opportunity to eliminate another inherited "imperfection" in the unrestricted exercise of power by the ruling imperialist forces [94]. According to the Enabling Act, the Reich government was allowed to deviate from the constitution, but not to affect the institutions of the Reichstag, the Reich Council and the Reich President. Now the following sentence was added to Article 4 of the law, which was passed unanimously by the Reichstag, i.e. with a "constitutional majority": "The Reich government may enact new constitutional law." The procedural requirement that "the requirements of constitution-amending legislation are fulfilled", as stated in the preamble to the "Reconstruction Act", was apparently satisfied. Although this provision of Art. 4 had nothing to do with the actual subject matter of the law, the legal trick of placing it in the "Reconstruction Act" had the effect that from then on the Reich government had seemingly legally been elevated to the rank of unrestricted constitutional legislator. None of the institutions existing under the Weimar Constitution, not even the highest ones, were now

⁶² Köttgen, p. 78.

⁶³ Huber, Constitutional Law, p. 203 f.

⁶⁴ Koellreutter, p. 146.

⁶⁵ Huber, Constitutional Law, p. 207.

⁶⁶ RGBl. 1934/I, p. 75; "Law on the Reconstruction of the Reich", dated January 30, 1934.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 1935/I, p. 1146; "Reich Citizenship Act", dated 15.9.1935; ibid. 1935/I, p. 1146; "Act for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor", dated 15.9.1935.

still legally taboo. State organs that had previously been formally protected by the constitution could be abolished in a seemingly legally correct manner. Completely new offices of state, declared to be of equal or higher rank, i.e. possessing the highest "constitutional rank", could be created without, in Bismarck's words, having to stumble over legal threads. The last barrier for the head of the executive to declare declarations of any content in any form to be the binding will of the state had fallen.

The "constitutional lawyers" of the Nazi empire subsequently tried in vain to find an order in the confusion of Führer decrees, Führer ordinances, government laws, Reichstag laws, etc. There was no such order. There was no such thing. The plan of Reich Interior Minister Frick in November 1935 to create a law "on the promulgation of legal provisions of the Reich" did not get beyond the draft stage.⁶⁸ The following event may shed light on the strange blossoming of this "system". On September 1, 1939, the day of the invasion of Poland, Hitler gave a speech to the Reichstag. In a gimmicky pose, he said that if anything happened to him, Göring should become his successor. The fascist constitutional expert Huber wrote that this

"Declaration of the Führer" had, "although it is not formulated as a law, the binding force of a legal sentence". It was "one of the most important constitutional laws of the National Socialist Reich".⁶⁹

A passage from a long, predominantly demagogic speech - that is what has now been given the title "constitutional law"! Normativity, formality, written form as elements of traditional civil law in general, of constitutional law in particular, along with public promulgation, prerequisites for everyone to know what is to be "lawful", were no longer considered essential. The process of dissolution of civil legality reached its temporary peak.

The option granted in the "Reconstruction Act" to enact "new constitutional law" through government legislation was immediately applied with the "Act on the Abolition of the Reichsrat" of February 14, 1934⁷⁰. According to Article 60 of the Constitution, the Reichsrat was "the representation of the German states in the legislation and administration of the Reich". The Enabling Act of March 24, 1933 had already rendered this body, which was made up of representatives [95] of the Länder, practically functionless. With the elimination of the independence of the federal states, it became completely superfluous.

The abolition of a central state body was soon followed by the "re-creation" of such a body. When Reich President Hindenburg died on August 2, 1934, the "Law on the Head of State of the German Reich"⁷¹, which had been passed by the government the day before, came into force. It announced that the office of Reich President would be combined with that of Reich Chancellor and that the previous powers of the Reich President would be transferred to the "Führer and Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler".

With the merging of the offices of head of state and head of government, the fascist restructuring of the state apparatus at the central level was complete. Hitler now united in his person all the decisive powers of the exercise of power. He appointed and dismissed the Reich ministers, he also had the right to appoint civil servants, he was commander-in-chief of the Wehrmacht, he could dissolve the Reichstag at any time and he was responsible for representing Germany in international law.

Huber's book on the "Constitutional Law of the Greater German Reich" states: "The Führer's power is comprehensive and total; it unites in itself all means of political organization; ... It is free and independent, exclusive and unlimited." Without any explicit legal fixation.

⁶⁸ See Broszat, p. 360 ff.

⁶⁹ Ernst Rudolf Huber, Reichsgewalt und Reichsführung im Kriege, in: Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft, vol. 101, Tübingen 1941, p. 542.

⁷⁰ RGBl. 1934/I, p. 89; "Law on the abolition of the Reichsrat", dated February 14, 1934.

⁷¹ Ibid., 1934/I, p. 747; "Law on the Head of State of the German Reich", dated August 1, 1934.

It was therefore also assumed that: "The Führer is the supreme ruler of the people." It was only logical to say "that on the basis of an all-encompassing Führer authority in this sense, there are no 'gaps in jurisdiction'"⁷².

Hitler was considered the head of state for life and could appoint his own deputy. In the law of August 1, 1934, the word "Führer" was used for the first time in a meaning that did not only refer to the Nazi party. From then on, the former constitutional oath was replaced by a "personal oath of allegiance" to the "Führer des Deutschen Reiches und Volkes" for soldiers, civil servants and ministers. While the official title of office was initially still "Führer and Reich Chancellor", from 1939 the title was simply reduced to "Der Führer". After initial uncertainty as to how to characterize the fascist state in Germany, the term "Fuehrer" was given a quasi-scientific, generally accepted interpretation at the end of 1933 with the coining of the term "völkischer Führerstaat"⁷³.

5. Leader cult, "leader state" and "leader principle"

The Führer cult, taken to extremes during the reign of German fascism, has not found a scientifically satisfactory explanation in its two aspects, that of state organization and that of mass mobilization, in the bourgeois literature, as far as can be discerned. The first aspect, for example, is "explained" by Lothar Gruchmann as "that the original leader's power had absorbed the state government's [96] power"⁷⁴. The second aspect is seen by Herrmann Glaser as a "unique chapter in the history of mass madness".⁷⁵

However, a personification of political power can be observed everywhere in imperialism. This is a general tendency that stems from the reactionary nature of imperialist rule in general. The general crisis of capitalism, its character as a rotting and dying social system that is both misanthropic and aggressive, gives rise to the need for a "strong state" that is supposed to be able to act as a guarantor of the exploitative order. Shakhnazarov rightly writes: "Every extraordinary form of state power requires ... the strictest organization and discipline on the part of the ruling class, taken to the extreme by autocracy and centralism. The logical completion of the ruling apparatus, the prerequisite for its effectiveness and mobility is the autocrat, a "leader" who has all the levers of the state apparatus in his hands and "stands above the law".⁷⁶ The personification of the bureaucratic-centralist state structures and the propagandistic emphasis on the respective top executive at the top of the political pyramid of power of the monopoly bourgeoisie as the "strong man" have both state-organizational as well as ideological and socio-psychological reasons. This general tendency is taken to an extreme when a fascist regime comes to power.

In this respect, the thesis of the "original power of the leader" is merely a very convenient expedient for presenting all the crimes of fascism as an outgrowth of this power and thus mystifying them. As early as the mid-1920s, Hans Freyer, president of the German Sociological Society during the Nazi era, wrote in his book "The State": "The position of the leader ... is of the most incomprehensible indeterminacy for intellectual concepts, but of the most infallible unambiguity in the metaphysical sense ... Leadership is the fullest authority and the most boundless competence, because it is the most unlimited mission: make us mature, capable and worthy of the state and use every means necessary to do so."⁷⁷ This is where irrationalist apologetics celebrates its triumph.

⁷² Huber, Constitutional Law, p. 230, p. 278, p. 234.

⁷³ Gustav Adolf Walz, Autoritärer Staat, nationaler Rechtsstaat oder völkischer Führerstaat?, in: Deutsche Juristen-Zeitung, 20/1933, p. 1334 ff.

⁷⁴ Lothar Gruchmann, Die "Reichsregierung" im Führerstaat, in: Klassenjustiz und Pluralismus, Festschrift für Ernst Frankenkel zum 75. Geburtstag am 26. Dezember 1973, Hamburg 1973, p. 189.

⁷⁵ Hermann Glaser, Das Dritte Reich. Anspruch und Wirklichkeit, Herder-Bücherei vol. 92, Freiburg i. Br. 1963, p. 67.

⁷⁶ Georgi Shakhnazarov, The Party of Communists in Socialist Society, Moscow 1974, p. 86 f.

⁷⁷ Hans Freyer, The State, Leipzig 1926, p. 113.

However, if one breaks the taboo with which types like Hitler were and are surrounded, one inevitably comes across those whose tools these "leaders" are. The predetermined will of such creatures is in reality oriented towards the basic economic and political interests of the financial oligarchy, which are aimed at brutally suppressing all independent movements of the masses under the leadership of the working class and expanding the spheres of exploitation by subjugating other nations. The prevention of the revolutionary seizure of power by the proletariat, the "damping down" of the political struggle, the rigorous curtailment of political opportunities for the broad masses, their keeping away from the affairs of the state, the apotheosis of the political rule of the financial oligarchy - these are the real motives for the exorbitant exaltation of imperialist "leader" figures.

The function of the often invoked "mass delusion" can also be explained rationally. The imperialist bourgeoisie is not resigned to the fact that the social basis of its rule is undergoing a process of shrinkage. It endeavors to artificially expand this social base and to prevent larger masses from turning to the revolutionary parties of the working class. Fascist movements, which purposefully proclaim "national and social renewal" and, by means of unbridled demagoguery, seek to isolate the petty-bourgeois strata, whose social position vacillates between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, from their natural ally, the proletariat, and to hand them over to their natural enemy, the imperialist bourgeoisie, have served and continue to serve such a purpose. "In order to 'get a grip' on the spontaneous petty-bourgeois element, to channel its energy into the desired direction and turn it into a pillar of the regime, a leader is needed. The best person for this role is an exalted member of the same milieu that he is supposed to mobilize: a petty trader, butcher or simply a lumpenproletarian. This is how the Hitlers, Rockwells and Poujades come to light."⁷⁸

The "mass delusion" is deliberately created. Figures such as Hitler are stylized by imperialist propaganda as "saviours of the nation". All the disappointed hopes of the sections of the population affected by the socio-economic effects of capitalist development are projected onto these "leaders" and the real social causes of hardship and misery are ignored with the help of an increasingly extensive range of manipulation tools.

The imperialist cult of the leader and the fascist "leader state" are therefore not unfathomable phenomena. Rather, they have their roots in the conditions of rule of decaying and dying capitalism. They are based on the negation of the creative role of the masses in history. They are intended to demonstrate that the working class is supposedly incapable of running the state. They are connected with the radical negation of democratic forms of the bourgeois state. Last but not least, they make visible that imperialism is "political reaction all along the line".⁷⁹

In fascist Germany, the so-called Führerprinzip, in its many variations, was seen as the determining factor in the entire state and social order and was also widely practised in the form of authoritarian individual leadership in all state institutions.⁸⁰ The negation of democracy was succinctly expressed in the fascist Führerprinzip.

Even if this leader principle prevailed at all levels and in all areas of state activity, it culminated in one person. This was "The Führer". Herbert Krüger, who returned to work as a professor in the FRG after 1945, wrote in "Führer und Führung" in 1935: "The Führer is a person; as a person, he acts in a certain people at a certain time. Both make him a unique phenomenon ... It is therefore quite rightly forbidden by the supreme party leadership for any chairman of an association or organization to call himself 'Der Führer' per se without adding a visibly distinctive suffix."⁸¹

⁷⁸ Shakhnazarov, p. 87 f.

⁷⁹ Lenin, Imperialism and the Division of Socialism, in: Lenin, Werke, Vol. 23, p. 103.

⁸⁰ See Hans Bernhard Braube, Die Führungsordnung des deutschen Volkes, Hamburg 1940/42.

⁸¹ Herbert Krüger, Führer und Führung, Breslau 1935, p. 15, p. 25.

With the creation of the office of "Führer and Reich Chancellor", the basic features of the state organization of [98] fascist Germany were essentially fixed until the end. In the further course of development, the bureaucratic-state monopoly structures of rule were further expanded with the direct preparations for war and during the war. In many cases, however, this happened in a way that made a mockery of Führer absolutism. The "Führer" was naturally unable to oversee the activities of the 42 Reich institutions directly subordinate to him (in 1941), let alone direct them. Instead of the proclaimed monocracy of the one "Führer", the "polycracy of departments" prevailed⁸². A senior official in the Reich Chancellery was remarkably frank: "Doubts, friction, conflicts, battles and deadlocks in the wide range of administrative branches are the natural side effects of the reorganization of public and community life ... It is neither in the nature of the Führer state nor does it correspond to the personal character of the Führer that all these difficulties, as indicated above, must be submitted to the supreme Führer for decision. On the contrary: although the Reich Ministers today are in principle subject to the unrestricted authority of the Führer with regard to all their decisions, even in trivial individual cases, in reality they possess an independence in the conduct of their official business which the Reich Ministers of the system era could never have enjoyed."⁸³

This was the contradictory reality of the fascist "Führer state" in Germany. In its twelve years of existence, it was the worst example of the monopoly bourgeoisie exercising political power to date. But there were other fascist "Führer states" back then. They still exist today, not in Europe, but in other parts of the world. They are political expressions of the misanthropic imperialist system of rule, products of imperialism. [99]

⁸² Broszat, p. 363.

⁸³ Hermann von Stutterheim, Die Reichskanzlei. Schriften zum Staatsaufbau, H. 45, Berlin 1940, p. 25 f.

Kurt Gossweiler: Fascism and the working class

In his "Lessons on Fascism", Palmiro Togliatti, consciously following Lenin's doctrine of the proletarian, Marxist party of a new type, described the fascist party as the "bourgeois party of a new type".¹ This designation contains the indication that the emergence of the Fascist Party was causally connected with the entry of bourgeois society into a new period, into the epoch of wars and revolutions, into the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

At the center of this epoch is the working class, which has matured to fulfill its historical mission.

The fascist party formed in Italy and Germany in the war and post-war years as the war and civil war party of the most reactionary circles of the imperialist bourgeoisie, entrusted with preventing the conquest of power by the working class and creating the conditions for the establishment of the open dictatorship of these circles.

Of course, it was also the task of all other bourgeois - including social democratic - parties to prevent the working class from conquering political power. What made the Fascist Party a new kind of party of the imperialist bourgeoisie was its extremely reactionary aims and its new methods of struggle against the workers' movement.

The extreme reactionary objective was that the Fascist Party was determined to meet the demand of the most reactionary agitators of the ruling class for the total *destruction* of the workers' movement through the use of the wildest, most unbridled terror.

At the same time, however - and this was the main difference between the new party of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the old, conservative right-wing parties - the Fascist Party presented itself as a radically anti-bourgeois, anti-capitalist party, as a party whose goal was "national socialism".²

It is precisely this - in conjunction with the empirically proven predominantly petty-bourgeois following of fascist parties everywhere - that is the starting point for all bourgeois theories that present fascism as an original petty-bourgeois protest movement, directed both against the socialist workers' movement and against big business. What all these "middle class theories" have in common is that they derive the specifically [100] fascist pairing of anti-socialism with anti-capitalist demagogy from the ambivalent class nature of the petty bourgeoisie.

As plausible as such interpretations may seem at first glance - especially when they are based on quotes from Marx, Engels and Lenin about the petty bourgeoisie - a simple consideration must lead to the question of how the petty bourgeoisie, which in modern capitalist society is fragmented and atomized into many groups with the most diverse and even opposing interests, should be able to form a unified (albeit not unopposed) ideology such as the fascist one, and atomized petty bourgeoisie, fragmented in modern capitalist society into many groups with the most diverse and even conflicting interests, should be able to produce a unified (albeit not unopposed) ideology such as fascism and a unified, centralized political movement such as fascism.

Even more important, however, is another circumstance. Some bourgeois authors mention the fact that the NSDAP did not initially aim to organize the petty bourgeoisie - as one would expect from a "class organization" of the petty bourgeoisie - but that its advertising was primarily aimed at the working class. Heinrich August Winkler explicitly states that the National Socialists did not see bourgeois classes as their target group in the early phase of the "movement", but instead aimed to win over the Marxist-oriented working class.³ Karl Dietrich Bracher also mentions, albeit only in passing, that the conversion of the socialistically organized worker to "national socialism" was a "starting point of National Socialism".⁴

¹ Palmiro Togliatti, *Lessons on Fascism*, Frankfurt a. M. 1973, p. 19, p. 47, p. 49, p. 125 ff.

² B. R. Lopukhov, *Fašizm i rabočee dvizenie v Italii, 1919-1929*, Moscow 1968, p. 30 ff.

³ Heinrich August Winkler, *Mittelstand, Democracy and Nationalism. Die politische Entwicklung von Handwerk und Kleinhandel in der Weimarer Republik*, Cologne 1972, p. 160.

⁴ Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur. Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus*, Cologne/(West.)Berlin 1969, p. 170.

An "autonomous petty-bourgeois movement" whose main task is not the representation of middle-class interests, but the "nationalization" of the working class - one has to admit that this would be a very strange thing!

If the NSDAP leadership was initially primarily concerned with winning over workers, this challenges every sociologist and historian to examine what influence such an objective had on the development of the special features characterizing the fascist mass movement, on its programme and its propaganda, and to ask whether the fascist combination of anti-capitalism and anti-socialism can still be regarded so unequivocally as a spontaneous expression of a middle-class mentality. Above all, however, the question then arises as to which social stratum or class the desire for a working class filled with nationalism originated in.

However: None of the bourgeois sociologists and historians - with the exception of Dirk Stegmann⁵ - have so far shown any interest in pursuing these questions. Bracher does not even make a feeble attempt in this direction, and Winkler is content with a purely personalistic explanation, which is otherwise frowned upon by representatives of the social-historical school: the wooing of the workforce is presented as a matter for Hitler alone, for whom it must have been self-evident, since he needed total social integration for the sake of his foreign policy goals.⁶

[101] The relationship of fascism to the working class in Germany has so far - as far as I can see - been the subject of only two major works by bourgeois authors, albeit of very different quality and message, namely the work of the American Max H. Kele "Nazis and Workers"⁷ and the extensive documentation by the Englishman Timothy W. Mason "Arbeiter- klasse und Volksgemeinschaft".⁸ As far as Kele is concerned, he tries by all means - above all through tendentious selection and interpretation of facts - to prove that the Nazi Party had the character of a workers' party rather than that of a petty bourgeois party⁹ - an attempt that was rejected almost universally due to its violent constructiveness.

In contrast to Kele, Mason comes to the conclusion on the basis of his in-depth research that fascism in power did not succeed in winning over the great mass of workers either through appeasement and measures calculated to corrupt or through brutal terror.¹⁰ Mason's research, however, is essentially limited to the period from 1936 to 1939.

The Marxist-Leninists never judged the class character of fascism according to the social composition of its mass following, but always according to the class content of its politics. From the very beginning, however, they have emphasized as a special feature of the fascist movement that it depends on winning over a mass base. In the assessments of the Communist International since the Fourth World Congress, it has always been emphasized that fascism seeks to win a mass base not only among the petty bourgeoisie, but also among the working class.¹¹

With regard to the founding of fascist trade unions in Italy, A. Lozovsky, head of the Red Trade Union International, even stated that the difference between reaction in general and fascist reaction was that fascism was based on a section of the workers, that

⁵ Dirk Stegmann, *Zwischen Repression und Manipulation: Konservative Machteliten und Arbeiter- und Angestelltenbewegung 1910-1919*. Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der NSDAP, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, XII/1972, p. 351 ff.

⁶ Winkler, p. 164.

⁷ Max H. Kele, *Nazis and Workers*. National Socialist appeals to German Labor, 1919-1933, Chapel Hill 1972.

⁸ Timothy W. Mason, *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*. Documents and Materials on German Labor Politics 1936-1939, Opladen 1975.

⁹ Kele, p. 212 ff.

¹⁰ Mason, p. 173.

¹¹ See *Istoriija fašizma v Zapadnoj Evrope*, (hereafter: *Istoriija fašizma*), Moscow 1978, Chapter IX; *Die internationale Kommunistische Bewegung im Kampf gegen den Faschismus*; Elfriede Lewerenz, *Zur Bestimmung des Wesens und der Funktion des Faschismus durch die Kommunistische Internationale*, in: *Studien zur Geschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Berlin 1974; see also Lewerenz in the present volume, pp. 21 ff.

he founded his own fascist workers' organizations.¹² However, after it became apparent in practice in the following years that fascist movements, wherever they appeared, found their mass following - insofar as they gained one at all - primarily among the petty bourgeoisie and very soon sought it out in a targeted manner, the particularity rightly emphasized by Lozovsky lost its significance and, as a result, its attention. For this reason, Marxist literature often contains somewhat abbreviated formulations that refer only to the intention of creating a *petty-bourgeois* [102] mass base as the goal of fascist de- magogy.¹³ This aptly characterizes what *ultimately* became a general tendency.

However, it is no coincidence that various works have recently emphasized the efforts of early fascism in particular, but also of fascism in power, to penetrate the working class and make ideological conquests there.¹⁴ For an examination of the genesis of fascism, especially from the point of view of working out the connection between the general crisis of capitalism and the emergence of fascism, the question of where the causes of fascism's originally observable striving for ideological conquests in the working class lie and what effects this striving had on the development of the characteristic features of fascism is of great interest. The aim of this article is to examine these questions using the examples of Italian and German fascism.

In Italian fascism, as in all fascism, several tendencies and political currents converged. The main components of Italian fascism were the Italian Nationalist Party, founded in 1910, and the movement launched by Mussolini during the First World War.¹⁵

The nationalist movement in Italy developed from the beginning of the 20th century as an expression of the aggressive domestic and foreign policy aspirations of the emerging Italian imperialism on the basis of the disappointment and dissatisfaction of the farthest right circles of the bourgeoisie and its intelligentsia with the meagre results of the "Risorgimento" and the unification of the country, which fell far short of the hopes for the re-establishment of a powerful, internally strong and consolidated empire.¹⁶

What Italian capitalism had in common with German capitalism was that the bourgeois revolution that created the nation state was mainly a revolution from above, took place relatively late and - especially with regard to the change in agrarian relations - stopped halfway. Consequently, it also had in common with German capitalism the delay in the division of the world among the great powers and had to resign itself to a few less desirable remnants.¹⁷ In contrast to German capitalism, however, the conditions for the rise to a strong industrial power were much less favorable for Italian capitalism, not least because of the almost complete lack of the most important industrial raw materials. Italian capitalism was therefore even more dependent on state support than German capitalism.¹⁸

The weakness of Italian capitalism also left its mark on the Italian bourgeoisie [103].¹⁹ For the nationalists, the ruling politicians were far too indecisive and mercenary. Their most determined section therefore saw a radical reorganization of domestic political relations in the sense of the establishment of a strong, authoritarian state power as the decisive solution.

¹² A. Losowski, Sie und wir im Kampf gegen den Krieg, in: Die Kommunistische Internationale, 26 (1923), p. 22; see also Togliatti, p. 63.

¹³ Sachwörterbuch der Geschichte Deutschlands und der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, vol. 1, Berlin 1969, p. 573.

¹⁴ See Istorija fašizma, p. 38 ff.; also the articles by Joachim Petzold and Wolfgang Ruge in the present volume, p. 261 ff., p. 125 ff.

¹⁵ S. M. Slobodskoj, Der italienische Faschismus und sein Zusammenbruch, Berlin 1948, p. 30 ff.; Karin Priester, Der italienische Faschismus. Ökonomische und ideologische Grundlagen, Cologne 1972, p. 113 ff.

¹⁶ Slobodskoy, p. 30; Lopukhov, p. 16 ff.

¹⁷ Slobodskoj, p. 9 ff.; Priester, p. 11 ff.

¹⁸ Priest, p. 15 f.

¹⁹ Togliatti, p. 34.

This was a prerequisite for Italy's aspired supremacy in the Mediterranean region and on the Balkans. Nationalism saw its main internal enemy in the socialist workers' movement. It had emerged as a "primarily anti-socialist movement".²⁰

One of the leading ideologues of Italian nationalism, Enrico Corradini, wrote in his book "Il nazionalismo italiano" that liberalism had fallen into decadence "because ... it was a very bad fighter against socialism". Socialism was an enemy "to be fought to the death or to life and without mercy". And a nationalist newspaper, the "Idea Nazionale", wrote: "There is nothing more obvious among us than the will to destroy socialism."²¹

In this determination not only to fight socialism, but to destroy it, the new attitude of the most rabid sections of the Italian bourgeoisie towards the workers' movement was already clearly expressed in 1914 - an attitude that required a new political force within the spectrum of bourgeois parties to put it into practice. This need gave rise to such a force - initially in the form of nationalism, and during the war, especially after the October Revolution, in the form of the Mussolini movement, which quite logically absorbed the Nationalist Party in February 1923.

Despite their hostility to socialism, the nationalists recognized that a policy that was openly anti-proletarian was doomed to failure in a country where the labour movement had a strong following among the urban and rural proletariat and strong organizations in the syndicates (trade unions).²² They therefore gave themselves an emphatically pro-worker image. For example, the group of nationalists in Turin, one of the northern Italian strongholds of the labour movement, defined their relationship to the working class with the words: "Since nationalism is not a class party, but an organization for the unification of all classes, since nationalism believes in and loves the rise of the working class, we maintain that the class struggle must be kept within the boundaries of national solidarity, and we want to try to unite the two productive classes of the nation, that of the industrialists and that of the workers."²³

Here - in 1909! - a second essential component of fascism, its objective and its ideology is anticipated here: the goal of voluntarily abandoning or limiting the class struggle of the working class in favor of a fictitious cooperation of the "productive classes" (among the German fascists the corresponding formula was later "workers of the forehead and the fist") in the name of "national solidarity" or the "people's community".

The "cooperation of the productive classes" seemed particularly important to Italian nationalism in order to increase the foreign policy thrust of Italian imperialism. The same Corradini, who so openly expressed his desire to destroy socialism, saw the combination of nationalism with syndicalism²⁴ as a possible way of achieving the desired "class solidarity". He wrote: "This is what syndicalism and nationalism have in common: these two doctrines are a school of solidarity (...). For what does a nation appear as? As what it essentially is: a class corporation, a large community."²⁵ According to Corradini, under what conditions could nationalism and syndicalism work together? His answer was: "We can imagine a syndicalism that stops at national borders and does not go beyond them, i.e.

²⁰ Priest, p. 71.

²¹ Ibid., p. 71, p. 73.

²² Togliatti wrote about the strength of the political organization of the working class in comparison to the Italian bourgeoisie: "The bourgeoisie could never rely on a united political organization, it never had a unified organization in the form of a party. This is one of the specific characteristics of Italian society in the pre-war period ... The only party of the pre-war period that can be described as a party in the true sense of the word is the Socialist Party" (Togliatti, p. 34 f.).

²³ Priest, p. 65.

²⁴ On Italian syndicalism, see Togliatti, p. 64; Lopukhov, Chapter I.

²⁵ Priester, p. 65; Lopuchov, p. 17 ff.

who stops working on an international level and only works on a national level (...). If that were to happen, the greatest contradiction between the two doctrines would be overcome."²⁶

Even before the First World War, Italian nationalism tried to win over the proletariat for class collaboration by distorting the imperialist struggle for competition and power into an international class struggle that Italy, as "the great proletarian among nations", had to wage against the rich nations. At the Nationalist Congress of 1910, at which the various groups of nationalists united to form a party, the "Associazione Nazionalista Italiana", Corradini gave a keynote speech entitled "Proletarian classes: socialism, proletarian nations: Nationalism".²⁷ The declaration of Italy as a "proletarian nation" served to justify the war of conquest by invoking the socialist doctrine of class struggle. "Just as socialism taught the proletariat the value of class struggle," Corradini explained in his speech, "we must teach Italy the value of international struggle."²⁸ On another occasion he wrote: "The definition of nationalism was therefore this: It is the socialism of the Italian nation in the world."²⁹ Alfredo Rocco, another influential nationalist leader, expressed similar sentiments.³⁰

It was not least the wooing of the Italian workers that prompted the leaders of nationalism to give it a pseudo-revolutionary veneer.³¹ Significantly, this in no way deterred industry, especially heavy industry, from promoting and supporting the nationalist groups and the Nationalist Party.³²

[105] Karin Priester concludes: "It is almost astonishing how nationalism in this early phase had already designed and demonstrated all the themes in whose variants one later wanted to see Mussolini's originality. In the phase from 1914-1919, Mussolini did nothing other than rediscover the approaches developed here for himself, whereby similarities can be found right down to the wording."³³

This fact is of fundamental importance. It confirms that Italian fascism was not an "invention", nor was it the creation of the fascist leaders, but that as a political current and as an ideology it was the product of new needs of the ruling class - needs that were caused by the growth of capitalism into monopoly capitalism and by its entry into the stage of its general crisis.

If it was characteristic of the nationalists that, in their efforts to gain broad support for nationalist ideology and practice, they focused not only on the bourgeoisie *but also* on the working class as a target group, Mussolini's initial efforts were *primarily* aimed at bringing the working class and its Socialist Party, of which he was a leader until 1914, into the nationalist fold.³⁴

Significantly, the outward break with Marxism occurred after the beginning of the World War, when Mussolini saw the collapse of the Second International and the defection of almost all its parties to the position of "defense of the fatherland" as proof that nationalism was an even stronger mass-moving force than socialism.³⁵ From now on he saw his

²⁶ Priest, p. 66.

²⁷ Ibid.; Slobodskoy, p. 30.

²⁸ Priest, p. 67.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 68.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 76 ff. - Corradini and Rocco were later, in 1922, the most ardent advocates of the 1923 merger of the Nationalist Party with Mussolini's Fascist Party. Both became ministers in the Fascist government. As Minister of Justice, Rocco was responsible for the Fascist Laws of 1925/26, which declared all parties except the Fascist one illegal and Italian Fascism entered its totalitarian phase.

³¹ Priest, p. 75.

³² Ibid., p. 70, p. 76.

³³ Ibid., p. 74.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 84 ff. - On Mussolini's political career, see Slobodskoy, p. 53 ff.; Lopukhov, p. 30 ff.

³⁵ Priest, p. 101.

The task was to fill the Socialist Party with this force of nationalism. In a very short time, he developed from a leader of the extreme left of the party into a chauvinist.

Mussolini wanted to persuade the Socialist Party, whose organ "Avanti" he headed as editor-in-chief, to abandon its position of neutrality and instead inspire the Italian working class to join the war. Called to account by the party leadership, he resigned as editor-in-chief of "Avanti", only to have a new newspaper, the "Popolo d'Italia", published under his leadership exactly one month later in November 1914, which soon became one of the loudest fanfares for Italy's entry into the war. Mussolini described this paper in its subtitle as a "socialist daily"; its aim was to persuade the Socialist Party as a whole, or at least large sections of it, to take a pro-war stance.³⁶

The speed with which the new Mussolini paper appeared, however, rightly aroused the suspicion among socialist workers that behind this newspaper were anti-working-class, big capitalist forces, of which Mussolini had made himself a tool. Nine days after the publication of the first issue of the "Popolo", on 24 November 1914, Mussolini was expelled from the party by his Milan party organization in disgrace. His spasmodic efforts to continue posing as a "socialist" had no effect on the socialist workers. Instead [106] of them, a motley crowd of nationalist intellectuals and interventionists of all possible hues gathered around him, i.e. supporters of Italy's entry into the war on the side of the Entente, including syndicalists and some renegades from the Socialist Party.³⁷ They joined together in December 1914 to form the "Fascio d'azione rivoluzionaria" (League for Revolutionary Action).³⁸

For Mussolini, "revolutionary action" now consisted primarily of driving internationalism out of the socialist movement and making it nationalist. He wrote: "I ask myself whether internationalism is an absolutely necessary element of the concept of socialism." And elsewhere: "The nation has not disappeared. We thought it was destroyed; instead we see it alive ... the class cannot kill the nation ... You can graft the class onto the nation, but the one does not cancel out the other."³⁹

After his betrayal of the party and the working class, Mussolini took on the task of turning the proletariat into a passive instrument for the war of the ruling class. In this role, however, he also gave the ruling class advice on how to facilitate the solution of this task. "The actual situation," he wrote in November 1916, "is as follows: the Italian industrial proletariat, the workers in the large and small factories are approaching the nation, are entering the nation ... A wise and far-sighted state policy can bind the industrial proletariat to the nation forever."⁴⁰

The history of the emergence of Italian fascism is thus the history of a movement that, under the banner of "national socialism", wanted above all to "bind" the proletariat to the nation. In terms of its original intentions, Italian fascism was by no means a movement that saw its task as organizing the petty bourgeoisie for a two-front struggle against capital and against the socialist movement, but a movement that saw its specific task in nationalist missionary activity among the working class in order to fill it with the spirit of class cooperation in the alleged interests of the nation.

However, fascism failed to achieve its goal insofar as it did not succeed in tearing decisive sections of the working class away from their organizations and winning them over. It did, however, exert all the greater attraction on certain circles of the petty bourgeoisie. About the

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 102, p. 106 f. - From August 1, 1918, the subtitle was: Tageszeitung der Kämpfer und produktiv Tätigen (*ibid.*, p. 212).

³⁷ Togliatti, p. 64; Lopuchov, p. 33 f.

³⁸ Priest, p. 106.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 101, p. 105, p. 108.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 111, see also p. 210 f.

The reasons for this will be discussed later. For Mussolini, however, winning over the workers remained a top priority for a long time after the war.⁴¹ At the same time, he presented himself as the spokesman and representative of the interests of the demobilized war participants who had been neglected by all responsible authorities.⁴²

On March 23, 1919, he founded the "Fasci di combattimento" (Combat Federations) in Milan, which he did so in a hall provided by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.⁴³ The original core was formed by his "fellow fighters" from the "Fascio d'azione rivoluzionaria", who were then mainly war veterans and activist nationalists of predominantly petty-bourgeois origin. Their common opponent was the [107] Socialist Party, which was still supported by the vast majority of workers. In the parliamentary elections in November 1919, the Fascists did not receive a single mandate, while the Socialist Party emerged from these elections as the strongest party with 154 mandates. In Milan, the Fascists' main base, they received only 4795 votes out of 346,000 eligible voters, compared to 180,000 for the Socialist Party.⁴⁴

The form of the fasci and the so-called "Programme of San Sepolcro" expressed the dual function of fascism in the struggle against the workers' movement: the fighting leagues the function of the struggle for destruction against the workers' organization, the programme the method of wooing the workers by means of pseudo-socialist demagogy. The "Programme of San Sepolcro" of 1919 was the model of a "national socialist" programme, i.e. a mixture of undisguised extreme nationalist demands and those borrowed from the program of the workers' movement, but characteristically modified and toned down.⁴⁵ However, the intention to win the approval of broad sections of the working class with this program was unmistakable. It called for the convening of a Constituent Assembly to abolish the monarchy, the extension of the right to vote and its extension to women, the improvement of social insurance, the setting of minimum wages, worker participation in the technical management of companies, the confiscation of 85 percent of war profits, the introduction of a one-off large capital levy, the confiscation of church property, the establishment of a people's militia and the nationalization of the arms industry.⁴⁶ It was along the same lines when Mussolini did not take a stand against the workers' factory occupations in September 1920, at the height of the revolutionary movement in post-war Italy, but rather criticized the reformist leaders for their indecision and cowardice and suggested that they support the movement.⁴⁷

As far as the other, terrorist side was concerned, it was characteristic that the fasci were not a party, but a "fighting movement". From the fasci grew the "squadri" (squadrons) as storm units, which - first in the agricultural areas of northern Italy, then also in the cities - became the carriers of the brutal fascist terror campaigns against the workers' organizations, the trade union buildings and the socialist municipal administrations.⁴⁸

Another component of the fascist movement that was closely linked to squadristism was the fascist "trade unions", which had around half a million members before the fascists came to power, around half of whom were agricultural workers.⁴⁹ With their help, the socialist trade unions were to be destroyed and their members incorporated into the fascist trade unions. At their head were leaders of syndicalism, which had veered towards nationalism.

⁴¹ Lopuchov, p. 54 ff.

⁴² Ibid., p. 54.

⁴³ Priester, p. 185; see also Lopuchov, p. 55.

⁴⁴ Slobodskoy, p. 56; Lopuchov, p. 72.

⁴⁵ Priest, p. 188 f.

⁴⁶ On the program of San Sepolcro, see Giulio Aquila (i.e. Gyula Sas, a Hungarian Communist), *Der Faschismus an der Macht*, in: *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, 24/25 (1923), p. 68; Togliatti, p. 22; Slobodskoj, p. 54; Priester, p. 186 ff. - On Mussolini's wooing of the workers at this time, see also Lopuchov, p. 56 f.

⁴⁷ Slobodskoy, p. 55; Togliatti, p. 22; Francis L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism in Europe*, Frankfurt a. M. 1968, S. 66.

⁴⁸ Slobodskoj, p. 60 ff.; *Istorija fašizma*, p. 58 f.; Carsten, p. 65 f.

⁴⁹ Togliatti, p. 66.

[108] Squadrists and syndicalists represented the extreme radical wing of fascism, which wanted to conquer power through violence.

Mussolini had no objection in principle to the use of violence against the Socialist Party, but he wanted to exploit every opportunity to broaden the base of fascism. He was mortally hostile to the left-wing forces in the Socialist Party, which broke away from the SPI in January 1921 and merged to form the Communist Party.⁵⁰ Himself a former leader of the SPI, Mussolini nevertheless continued to wage his struggle against this party to a certain extent until 1922 as a struggle *for* this party and the reformist trade unions - in the sense that he did not rule out alliances with the reformist leaders, with the help of which the whole organization or at least parts of it could be dragged over to the position of fascism. This line of Mussolini's was particularly evident in the conclusion of the so-called peace pact with the SPI and even after the fascists came to power.

Mussolini concluded the "peace pact" with the leaders of the Socialist Party on August 3, 1921; it stipulated the cessation of mutual attacks, including the Fascist terror campaigns. The pact was intended to prepare the ground for a coalition government between the Fascists, the Socialist Party and the Catholic People's Party.⁵¹ However, Mussolini had not foreseen the effect this would have in his own ranks: The majority of his sub-leaders, headed by Dino Grandi, the Fascist leader of Bologna, firmly rejected the "peace pact" and threatened to depose Mussolini. Their protest was in line with the interests of the large landowners and heavy industry.⁵² The fascist movement was plunged into a serious crisis. Mussolini resigned from the leading bodies. In November 1921, at the Fascist National Congress in Rome, reconciliation was achieved between the two factions. Mussolini had to finally abandon the "peace pact", but was able to push through the transformation of Fascism into a party that he had been striving for.⁵³

Mussolini's willingness to make pacts with leaders of the socialist organizations immediately after his appointment as Prime Minister by the King put him at odds with his sub-leaders for the last time. He immediately contacted leaders of the "Confederazione Generale del Lavoro", the reformist General Confederation of Labour, to negotiate their entry into the government. The trade union leaders were prepared to join a Mussolini cabinet. However, Mussolini's own people, the Squadrists, the Syndicalists and the government partners, the Nationalists, were not prepared to tolerate these people in the government.⁵⁴ They agreed with Mussolini when he declared - as he did in the Senate on November 27, 1922 - that there could be no

"quiet, united and unanimous nation" if the 20 million workers were "condemned to an unhappy life in inadequate conditions"⁵⁵, and they had no objection to Mussolini emphasizing his proletarian origins - he was the son [109] of a blacksmith - when he spoke to workers.⁵⁶ But they were not prepared to share the leadership of the fascist trade unions with the leaders of the socialist trade unions.

At this point, we can stop our examination of the relationship between Italian fascism and the working class and try to briefly summarize the results: The strength and organization of the Italian workers' movement made the "workers' question" a question of primary economic and political importance for the Italian bourgeoisie even before the First World War. During the war and especially after the First World War, it became the decisive issue for securing and consolidating the bourgeois order. None of the existing bourgeois parties was capable of solving this question. Hence the need arose in the bosom of the Italian bourgeoisie for a new political force that could solve the dual task of

⁵⁰ The Italian Communist Party. Brief historical outline, Berlin 1952, p. 31 ff.

⁵¹ Togliatti, p. 24; Lopuchov, p. 138; Priester, p. 196 f.

⁵² Togliatti, p. 24.

⁵³ Aquila, p. 66; Lopuchov, p. 141 f.

⁵⁴ Aquila, p. 72; Togliatti p. 27.

⁵⁵ Aquila, p. 83.

⁵⁶ Ibid.; see also Lopukhov, p. 178.

could smash the labor movement and at the same time lead the working class onto the path of nationalism and class collaboration. Fascism arose in response to this need.

Nationalism and the Mussolini movement logically, indeed inevitably, arrived at the same solution, namely the formula of "national socialism". This formula *did not* emerge as the expression of a petty-bourgeois utopian idea of socialism, but, as has been proven, as a luring formula for workers in order to detach them from international class-struggle socialism and win them over to voluntary service in front of the imperialist cart. While the Nationalists aimed from the outset to smash the socialist workers' movement and allow only "national" syndicates to exist, Mussolini hoped for a long time to achieve a "socialist" movement that would be accepted by the left.

"purified" Socialist Party into a "national" Socialist Party.

One of the most striking features that distinguished Italian fascism from the usual right-wing movements and parties - its pseudo-socialist, "anti-capitalist" demagoguery, its "anti-bourgeois" posturing, its claim to be a "revolutionary" movement - all stemmed above all from its intention to make conquests in the working class. But this is precisely what he did not succeed in doing, or to be more precise: until the "March on Rome", he only succeeded to such an inadequate extent that the task as a whole must be described as unsolved.⁵⁷

The attempt to convert internationalist socialists to nationalism through the lure of national socialism failed. It did, however, produce the by no means undesirable result of a petty-bourgeois mass following; not to any significant extent immediately, however, but only after all the hopes that these petty-bourgeois classes had placed in the workers' movement and bourgeois democracy had been dashed⁵⁸, i.e. after the failure of the great movement of factory occupations. Until then, until October 1920, the fascist movement was little more than a meaningless sect.⁵⁹ This must be noted [110] because it refutes the "theories" according to which fascism and fascist ideology are the original product of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie. The petty bourgeoisie did not produce fascism, but was "conquered" or captured by fascism. The fact that it was attracted to a movement that was not only nationalist, but also socialist, was - just like its previous hopes in the workers' movement - a symptom of the fact that not only the proletariat, but also the lower strata of the bourgeoisie were now living under conditions that they found intolerable and were no longer willing to accept.

The appeal of the fascists to certain petty-bourgeois classes was reinforced by political mistakes made by the Socialist Party and the organizations under its influence, e.g. by measures taken by the agricultural workers' unions, which also turned against middle peasants, by sectarian behaviour towards war participants and war victims, etc. ; nevertheless, the mobilizability of the petty bourgeoisie by a pseudo-socialist, pseudo-revolutionary movement such as fascism was primarily an effect and at the same time a clear symptom. etc.⁶⁰ ; nevertheless, the mobilization of the petty bourgeoisie by a pseudo-socialist, pseudo-revolutionary movement such as fascism was first and foremost an effect and at the same time a clear symptom of the general crisis of capitalism.

The German example also illustrates the connection between the general crisis of capitalism and the emergence of the need for a new fascist political organization.

⁵⁷ On the social composition of the fascist movement at the end of 1921, see Togliatti, p. 37 and Slobodskoj, p. 60.

⁵⁸ Clara Zetkin, The Struggle against Fascism. Report at the III Extended Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, June 20, 1923, in: Zetkin, Zur Theorie und Taktik der kommunistischen Bewegung, Leipzig 1974, p. 297 ff., p. 304; Slobodskoj, p. 58.

⁵⁹ According to Schieder, the number of fasci at the end of 1920 was only 88 with a total of 80,476 [110] members (Wolfgang Schieder, Der Strukturwandel der faschistischen Partei Italiens in der Phase der Herrschaftsstabilisierung, in: Faschismus als soziale Bewegung, ed. by Wolfgang Schieder, Hamburg 1976, p. 80). - Ernst Nolte, based on other sources, gives higher figures, but also comes to the conclusion that until October 1920 the progress of fascism was small (Ernst Nolte, Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche, Munich 1963, p. 319).

⁶⁰ Slobodskoy, p. 56 f.; Lopukhov, p. 104 ff.

type in the most reactionary circles of the imperialist bourgeoisie and its political business leaders.

Even before the turn of the century, the "modern" bourgeois realized that, in the interests of imperialist rule, it was necessary to broaden its mass base by pushing it forward into the working class.⁶¹ Around this time, their heavy-industrial class comrades and their closest allies, the East Elbe Junkers, were still firm and unshaken in their belief that only the police sabre and the rifle bullet were suitable for maintaining the authority of the bourgeois state against the "rabble", but were also completely sufficient. They therefore tended to regard the rapprochement of the "liberal" bourgeoisie with the revisionists within social democracy as a kind of class betrayal.

The general crisis was able to change their hostility towards every current of the workers' movement - whether reformists or revolutionaries, whether party or trade union - to the extent that this hostility became even more irreconcilable and hateful. The urge to use violence and terror against the workers' movement, which had always been particularly strong among them, reached its highest level after the October Revolution - the will to destroy it completely. At the same time, however, [111] doubts about the omnipotence of naked violence had already crept in among them in the last years before the war. The closer they came to the war for the redivision of the world, which they had longed for for so long and had done everything in their power to bring about, the more uneasy they became at the thought of the many millions of guns that would then end up in workers' fists. It was therefore no coincidence that immediately before the war, discussions began in the All-German Association about the need to lead the mass of workers back to the "national idea".⁶² The war itself and even more so the revolutionary events in Russia then accelerated the process of realization, even in the ranks of these most reactionary representatives of imperialist Germany, that without a basis in the masses, including and even above all in the working masses, their interests could no longer be asserted and their power was endangered.

Their desire to destroy the workers' movement was therefore accompanied by a no less strong desire to "nationalize" the working masses.

This was a development with far-reaching effects. The coincidence of these two such opposing and contradictory aspirations - to destroy the workers' organizations and at the same time to draw the workers onto their own class soil - was the starting point for years of searching for forms of organization that would be able to satisfy this two-sided, ambivalent desire; it was also the starting point for continuous experimentation with new organizations that were provoked by this desire. At the end of this series of experiments, a fascist-type party emerged, as in Italy and Germany.

This series of experiments followed an almost textbook course: from organizations that were more or less directly led by the bourgeoisie itself, through organizations that possessed an ever greater degree of external independence, to the "independent" "national workers' party" that was apparently even hostile to capitalist rule. Stages in this sequence can be considered:

- the founding of the Fatherland Party (September 1917);
- the almost simultaneous formation of "committees for a German workers' peace";
- the formation of a "working group" of the "national workers' associations", i.e. the yellow labor associations held by the employers; and finally
- (February 1918) the formation of the "German Workers' and Employees' Party" (DAAP), which can be seen as the forerunner of the NSDAP.⁶³

⁶¹ V. I. Lenin, *Der Reformismus in der russischen Sozialdemokratie*, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 27, Berlin 1963, p. 216; *Klassenkampf - Tradition - Sozialismus. Von den Anfängen der Geschichte des deutschen Volkes bis zur Gestaltung der entwickelten sozialistischen Gesellschaft in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*. Grundriß, Berlin 1974, p. 325.

⁶² See the article by Joachim Petzold in this volume, p. 261 ff.

⁶³ Thus Stegmann, p. 391.

Although the DAAP was lost without a sound after the end of the war, its foundation represented an important milestone on the road to a fascist-type organization. It emerged as the first result of the insight of those behind the Fatherland Party, in particular its deputy chairman Wolfgang Kapp, the later civilian leader of the military coup of March 1920 named after him, that only an independent workers' party that was outwardly independent of the bourgeoisie had any prospect of "rising up against Social Democracy".⁶⁴

[112] This meant the breakthrough - although, as the Kapp Putsch would later show, not yet final - to a new strategic and tactical conception of the heavy industrial circles behind the All-Deutscher Verband in their struggle against the entire workers' movement. They, too, had become acutely aware of the fact that they could no longer manage without the masses. This forced them to leap over their own shadow and, putting aside their hitherto insurmountable, deep-seated mistrust of any form of mass movement, to do the same as their class comrades from the liberal faction and, in order to conduct their business in the lower and lowest strata of society, to draw on political organizations that were formally independent of the bourgeoisie and led by members of those same lower strata.

This new strategic conception was - as in Italy, so also in Germany - the first and most important subjective condition for the emergence of fascist movements. Incidentally, this also makes it clear that fascism's ties to the most reactionary circles of finance capital are not just a matter of fascism in power, but an essential characteristic of fascism from its very beginning. It is first and foremost the "party of a new type" of precisely these most reactionary, imperialist and chauvinist circles of the big bourgeoisie, the party of the unification of the terror of annihilation with the flattery of the working class.

The first - unsuccessful - attempt with the DAAP was followed by various others after the November Revolution. Under the sponsorship of all-German circles, the "German Workers' Party" (DAP) was founded in Munich in January 1919 by the railroad locksmith Anton Drexler, from which the "National Socialist German Workers' Party" emerged shortly afterwards⁶⁵; At around the same time, the "German Socialist Party" was founded, also on the initiative of all-German circles⁶⁶; in November 1921, the "German Social Party"⁶⁷ was founded in Berlin and in December 1922, the "German People's Freedom Party"⁶⁸ came into being.

All of these parties declared their main task to be the "return of the German worker to the national idea". None of them were originally founded by the petty bourgeoisie, but were all founded on the initiative of representatives of upper middle-class imperialist organizations such as the Alldeutscher Verband. Even if their founders - such as Drexler - came from a petty-bourgeois milieu or from bourgeois working classes, they were, as even bourgeois authors emphasize, controlled by bourgeois backers.⁶⁹

However, their fiercest fight was directed against "Bolshevism" and the "November criminals". For this reason, they had the strongest attraction for counter-revolutionary soldiers, officers, students and nationalist petty bourgeois and were therefore predominantly petty bourgeois in their social composition from the outset.

In contrast to the fasci in Italy, the two components[113] of fascism - the political propaganda movement and the terrorist organization - emerged separately in Germany

⁶⁴ Thus Wilhelm Gellert, employee of the Kalisyndikat and founder of the above-mentioned "German Workers' and Employees' Party", in a letter to Wolfgang Kapp dated November 8, 1917 (ZStA Merseburg, Rep. 92, Nachlaß Kapp, Bd. DX 77, Bl. 40). Gellert founded the party in close contact and consultation with Kapp (ibid.).

⁶⁵ Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, ed. by an editorial collective under the direction of Dieter Fricke, vol. II, Leipzig 1970, p. 388 f.; see also Istorija fašizma, chap. 4 and 5.

⁶⁶ Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, Vol. I, Leipzig 1968, p. 763 ff.

⁶⁷ Ibid., vol. I, p. 757 ff.

⁶⁸ Ibid., vol. I, p. 765 ff.

⁶⁹ Georg Franz-Willing, Die Hitlerbewegung, Hamburg/(West-)Berlin 1962, p. 63 (for Drexler and the DAP).

from each other. Resident militias and Freikorps had formed for the armed struggle against the revolutionary workers, which initially went into action under the command of the state organs, above all the Reichswehr. However, they were imbued with the same spirit of hatred and the will to annihilate the workers' movement as the nascent fascist parties. In many cases, the members of the Freikorps were also members of one of the above-mentioned parties, so that the separation between the two continued to exist in organizational terms, but in terms of personnel the relationships became ever closer.

Why did the NSDAP prove to be the most promising of the numerous fascist parties and groups? A whole series of factors were decisive for this, of which the following are particularly important:

Firstly, the NSDAP was the only party to follow the path of the Italian fascists and, by forming its own "storm detachments", adopted the organizational structure that best suited the dual task of the terrorist attack on the workers' movement and the propagandistic treatment of the masses. The fact that it did so was mainly due to the fact that officers of the Munich Reichswehr leadership, such as Karl Mayr and Ernst Röhm, took care of it⁷⁰; they ensured that militarily trained people joined the party, some of whom came from the Reichswehr itself, others from the military associations, and who took over the organization of the military branch of the party, the SA.

Secondly, this party committed itself more resolutely than any other to the task of "nationalize". It was the most active in its efforts to attract workers to its meetings and, compared to all other similar parties, achieved the greatest successes, however modest and unsatisfactory these were in absolute terms.⁷¹

Once again, it was primarily the Munich Reichswehr command in the form of Mayr and Röhm, in particular, who directed the party's efforts towards recruiting workers. Mayr himself testified to this in a letter he wrote to Wolfgang Kapp, the initiator of the first "national workers' party", the DAAP, on September 24, 1920. Mayr informed Kapp that he and his friends had created the organization of "national radicalism" in Munich. He continued literally with reference to the NSDAP: "The national workers' party must provide the basis for the strong strike force that we hope for. The program is certainly still somewhat clumsy and often incomplete. We will add to it. What is certain is that we have already gained quite a few supporters under this banner. Since July last year I have been trying ... to strengthen the movement

... I have brought very capable young people onto their feet. Mr. Hitler, for example, has become a moving force, a first-rate public speaker. We have over 2,000 members in the Munich local group, whereas in the summer of 1919 there were less than 100."⁷²

This "Mr. Hitler" had learned his political lessons in the educational courses of the [114] Munich Reichswehr leadership, and he had undoubtedly learned them well. His argumentation in a memorandum to financially strong patrons of the party from October 1922, in which he asked for a subsidy of around 53 million paper marks (around 100,000 gold marks at the time), was evidence of this.⁷³ This memorandum already contains the basic pattern of all his later appearances before his big capitalist patrons.⁷⁴ This pattern shows that he was fully aware of the dual task he and his party were expected to solve.

First, he brought up what depressed his patrons the most: "In fact, the sum of the 'international-Marxist' members of our people represents over 40% of our total population. This is an appalling truth, especially because the most active members of this 40%,

⁷⁰ Ernst Deuerlein, Hitler's entry into politics and the Reichswehr, in: VfZ, 2/1959, p. 177 ff.; Franz-Willing, p. 126 ff.

⁷¹ By December 1930, only 30,718, or 8.5 percent of all those admitted to the NSDAP, were workers (see Reinhard Kühnl, *Der deutsche Faschismus in Quellen und Dokumenten*, Cologne 1975, p. 98).

⁷² ZStA Merseburg, Rep. 92, Kapp estate, vol. E II 26, p. 339 ff.

⁷³ The memorandum is reproduced in: Albrecht Tyrell, *Führer befiehlt ... Testimonies from the "Kampfzeit" of the NSDAP. Documentation and Analysis*, Düsseldorf 1969, p. 47 ff.

⁷⁴ See Kurt Gossweiler, *Hitler und das Kapital*, in: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, 7/1978, p. 842 ff.

most energetic elements of the nation are currently united." He then offered his party to them as the wildcat executor of their wishes with regard to the workers' movement, reducing their goal to the succinct formula: "Destruction and eradication of the Marxist world view".

He named the means to achieve this goal:

- "1. an incomparable, ingeniously conceived propaganda and educational organization, encompassing all possibilities of human influence;
2. an organization of ruthless strength and brutal determination, ready to counter every terror of Marxism with one ten times greater, the so-called 'Sturmabteilung' of the movement."

In connection with the necessity of the press, he emphasized once again that it was above all important to him to bring the "national idea" to those "who must be won over first and foremost, the (!) workers".

It was precisely the assumption of this combined task of fighting terrorism against the workers' movement and simultaneous "national missionary work" among the workers that secured the NSDAP the goodwill of broad circles of the ruling class, initially in Bavaria, but then also outside Bavaria. There are countless examples of this, a few of which are mentioned here.

In a memorandum from December 1922, General Franz Ritter von Epp, infantry commander of the VII Reichswehr Division stationed in Bavaria, reported to his superiors in a highly exaggerated manner on the "merits" of the NSDAP, stating that the national forces in the bourgeoisie and the building community had "found strong allies in the working classes through Hitler's National Socialist movement".⁷⁵ Friedrich Hilpert, one of the leaders of the Bavarian German nationalists, expressed his hope in July 1920 that the NSDAP would "carry the national idea into the German working class", because as long as this idea only encompassed the bourgeois parties, it could not bring about "recovery".⁷⁶

Hans Otto Sieveking, one of the leaders of the German nationalists in Hamburg, wrote in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* in December 1922 that the founding of the NSDAP was to be understood and even welcomed,

"if its supporters see their task merely in carrying the national idea into the ranks of international socialism". However, he added: "But the movement degenerates into mischief if, as unfortunately happens all too often north of the Main, one acts as a divisive fungus in the national camp and now leads people who are already national back to socialism."⁷⁷ Here, irritations, misgivings and competitive fears were expressed, which repeatedly came to light in bourgeois circles and above all among the politicians of the other bourgeois parties, especially in view of the unscrupulous social demagogy of the Nazis.

It is obvious that a task and objective such as "bringing the national idea into the ranks of international socialism" had to determine the choice of name and even more so the formulation of the program of such a party of "national socialism". Thus, after the Reichswehr had taken over Drexler's "German Workers' Party", its name was deliberately changed to "National *Socialist* German Workers' Party" in order to increase its appeal to the working class.

As far as the programme of such a party is concerned, there is really no need to mention that its social character and the real goals of the party leadership in the socio-political field cannot be read from it, but only their ideas about which slogans and ideas are to be used to mobilize the masses for the real goals. If one analyzes under this

⁷⁵ See Heinrich Bennecke, *Hitler und die SA*, Munich/Vienna 1962, p. 46.

⁷⁶ Werner Maser, *Die Frühgeschichte der NSDAP. Hitlers Weg bis 1924*, Frankfurt a. M./Bonn 1965, p. 234.

⁷⁷ ZStA Potsdam, Reich Commissioner for the Supervision of Public Order, vol. 285, p. 31.

If we look at the "25 points" of the NSDAP program from this perspective⁷⁸, we can see that certain points were intended to displace class consciousness with "national community thinking" and "national and racial consciousness", while other points were intended to create the impression that the NSDAP was right to call itself a "socialist workers' party".

The first category included, for example, points 1 (unification of all Germans into one Greater Germany), 2 (equal rights of the German people vis-à-vis other nations), 4 ("Citizens of the state can only be comrades of the people, comrades of the people only if they are of German blood"), 8 ("Any immigration of non-Germans is to be prevented").

The first category naturally also included the demand for "land and soil (colonies)" from point 2; this was intended to replace the idea of raising national prosperity by overthrowing capitalism and socializing the means of production with the idea of enriching one's own people at the expense of other peoples.

The second category included points 10 ("The first duty of every citizen must be to work mentally or physically") and 11 ("Abolition of income without work or effort"), which was a deliberate reference to the slogan "He who does not work should not eat", which was very popular in the labor movement.

Point 13 ("Nationalization of all [previously] already socialized [trusts] enterprises") also belonged to this category, with which the at least partial adoption of the core demand of proletarian socialism, the socialization of the means of production, was to be feigned. Point 14 ("profit-sharing in large enterprises") also belonged to this category, although it revealed that a general nationalization of large capitalist enterprises was not intended; it did, however, [116] tie in with certain ideas that were alive in the reformist workers' movement.

This category also included a number of points that were based on various demands of the workers' parties, such as point 7 ("We demand that the state commits itself to providing first and foremost for the earning and living opportunities of citizens"), which was intended to reflect the demand for the right to work, or point 15, which called for a generous expansion of old-age pensions, and point 20, which demanded "the provision of higher education" for "every capable and industrious German".

After all, it was primarily, although not solely, aimed at the working class when the Nazi leaders, in marked contrast to the other bourgeois parties, presented the NSDAP as a "worldview party" and as a party of a radical, "revolutionary" renewal of society, as a party of social justice, which not only fought against proletarian class thinking, but also against bourgeois class conceit.

In "Mein Kampf", Hitler expressed himself as follows on the necessity of confronting the Marxist workers' movement with a "world view": "Every attempt to fight a world view by means of power will ultimately fail as long as the struggle does not take the form of an attack for a new spiritual attitude. Only in the struggle between two world views can the weapon of brute force, used persistently and ruthlessly, bring about a decision in favor of the side it supports."⁷⁹

With every word, the author of such lines betrays himself as an agent of the ruling class: As it turns out, he has no worldview of his own, but worldview is merely a necessary accessory of the terrorist struggle against the labor movement, which he has set out to smash and promised the rulers. This may become even clearer from the next sentences of his essay: "However, the fight against Marxism has so far always been the only way to achieve this.

⁷⁸ The NSDAP program is printed in: Siegfried Vietzke/Heinz Wohlgenuth, Deutschland und die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik 1919-1933, Berlin 1966, p. 393 ff.; see also Istorija fašizma, p. 40.⁷⁹ Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, 415th/416th ed., Munich 1939, p. 189 f.

failed ... What were we going to give the masses if, suppose, Social Democracy had been broken? There was not a single movement that could have been expected to succeed in captivating the large crowds of workers who had become more or less leaderless." So it is always a matter of drawing the workers under the spell of reaction and nationalism!

The core of the "world view" that was to be used for this purpose was considered to be the "doctrine of race", and in particular anti-Semitism. Hitler also followed in the footsteps of the All-Germans.⁸⁰ In the eyes of many Nazi party leaders, the usefulness, indeed irreplaceability, of anti-Semitism as a "world view" lay in the fact that it provided a kind of universal key to explaining the entire history of the world and all the ills of capitalist society by replacing the class struggle with the race struggle as the moving principle.⁸¹

[117] In the Nazi program, this "world view" was reflected in various points, but mainly in point 4: "No Jew can ... be a comrade of the people."

As far as the Nazi Party's self-portrayal as a party of revolutionary renewal and social justice was concerned, it also consciously competed with the labor movement and its goal of building a new social order. This happened, for example, in points 6 ("We fight the corrupting parliamentary economy of appointments based solely on party considerations without regard to character and abilities") and 10 ("The activity of the individual must not violate the interests of the general public, but must be carried out within the framework of the whole and for the benefit of all"), but above all in point 12 ("In view of the enormous sacrifices of property and blood that every war demands of the people, personal enrichment through war must be described as a crime against the people. We therefore demand the complete confiscation of all war profits") and 18 ("We demand the ruthless fight against those who harm the common interest through their activities. Common criminals, usurers, racketeers, etc. are to be punished by death, regardless of denomination or race").

Finally, point 23 is part of the NSDAP's self-portrayal as a party of purifying renewal: "We demand the legal fight against deliberate political lies and their dissemination through the press." A comparison of this point with the truth content of the Nazi press provides the right yardstick for assessing the seriousness of all the points mentioned.

It was in line with both the Nazi leadership's need for advertising and the basic principle of presenting their party as an instrument for bringing about the "national community" that would overcome class barriers if the program addressed all classes, including the urban petty bourgeoisie and farmers. However, only points 11 ("Breaking the bondage of interest") and 16 ("We demand the creation of a healthy middle class and its preservation, immediate communalization of large department stores and their rental at cheap prices to small tradesmen, strictest consideration of all small tradesmen in deliveries to the state, provinces or municipalities") contained specific "middle class" demands. Point 17 is aimed specifically at farmers and agricultural workers ("We demand a land reform adapted to our national needs, the creation of a law for the free expropriation of land for public utility purposes. Abolition of land rent and prevention of all land speculation"). It would therefore be a blatant misjudgement to describe the NSDAP's programme as a utopian catalog of wishes and demands of radicalized petty bourgeoisie. Rather, it was a *mixtum compositum* [jumble], put together by sophisticated demagogues and in its

⁸⁰ The leadership of the All-German Association dealt particularly intensively with anti-Semitism at its meeting on 19.

Prof. Gebhard emphatically argued that the "Jewish question" should not be treated merely as an economic issue, but rather "as a question of worldview" (ZStA Potsdam, ADV, vol. 121, p. 45).

⁸¹ See Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the 20th Century. Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*, Munich 1942 - For the NSDAP, the central significance of this "work" by an intellectual impostor lay in the fact that it could at least point to a book in which this "Weltanschauung" was bound, albeit unpalatable, in its claim to be a "Welt-[117]anschauungspartei".

Effect precisely calculated. It was not exclusively, but primarily intended to finally create a mass base for the extreme reactionary faction of the ruling class, including among the working class; it also aimed to mobilize as many members of all classes and social strata as possible to fight against the workers' movement and the Weimar Republic.

There is not space here to show how much the striving to win over workers also shaped the outward appearance, the style and ritual of the marches and meetings, the character of the press and the symbolism of the NSDAP. It should only be mentioned that Hitler himself confirmed that the preference for the red color in the party's flag and posters, the imitation of certain external manifestations of the socialist workers' movement (mass marches, mass rallies, etc.) were calculated to impress workers and attract them to the party.⁸²

The success with which all this was undertaken is well known. The Nazi Party did succeed in providing the ruling class with a petty-bourgeois mass base for the establishment of its open terrorist dictatorship. However, it did not succeed in keeping the promise made to its financial capitalist patrons to induce the Communist and Social Democratic workers to abandon their ideas, turn away from their parties and go over to the side of reaction and fascism.⁸³

This led to complaints and grievances from their military and capitalist backers and patrons. For example, one of the military patrons of the NSDAP, Major Konstantin Hierl from the Reichswehr Ministry in Berlin, complained to Hitler in 1920 that the NSDAP meetings were so poorly attended by industrial workers. In a letter dated July 3, 1920, Hitler gave the very revealing answer: "Your opinion that our meetings were not attended enough by industrial workers is only partially correct. We do not fail to recognize the difficulty of converting workers, some of whom had already belonged to organizations for decades, to us without further ado. The first prerequisite for this was the holding of large mass meetings in order to obtain an effective means of propaganda for the masses. For as a child of the people, the worker will only ever have respect for a movement that shows itself to be worthy of respect. But this alone made it necessary for us, in order to guarantee the calm progress of our negotiations, to turn to a certain middle class, of which we knew that it thought and felt inwardly national, and which was only partly politically homeless as a result of our present party attitude."⁸⁴

This situation did not change later, at the time of the great electoral successes of the Nazi Party at the beginning of the 1930s. Disappointed and disgruntled newspapers of the [119] monopoly bourgeoisie noted:

"The fact is that the red castle of Marxism has proved unshakeable in the present wave of this election ... The National Socialists have not succeeded in realizing the idea ...' to wrest the German working class from internationalism and to educate the German socialist worker to nationalism."⁸⁵

⁸² Henry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier 1941-1942*, reedited by Percy Ernst Schramm on behalf of the publisher, Stuttgart 1965, p. 261 f.

⁸³ Compare the Reichstag election results from 1928 to 1932 for the two workers' parties:

Party	in 1000 2.5.1928	14.9.1930	31.7.1932	6.11.1932
KPD	3265	4592	5283	5980
SPD	9153	8575	7960	7248
together	12418	13167	13243	13228

(After *Dokumente zur deutschen Geschichte 1924-1929*, ed. by Wolfgang Ruge and Wolfgang Schumann, edited by Wolfgang Ruge with the collaboration of Klaus Dichtl, Berlin 1975, p. 110; *Dokumente zur deutschen Geschichte 1929-1933*, edited by Kurt Gossweiler with the collaboration of Margarete Piesche, Berlin 1975, p. 97).

⁸⁴ Herbert Erb/Hans Henning Freiherr Grote, Konstantin Hierl. The man and his work, Munich 1939, p. 40 f.

⁸⁵ *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, dated October 14, 1930 - Similar comments were also found in other upper middle-class newspapers.

Hitler's argument to Hierl, quoted above, is revealing in several respects. Firstly, it confirms the priority that both sides - Hitler's "employers" as well as himself - gave to the "conversion" of the working class. For Hitler, recourse to the "national" petty bourgeoisie was - at least at the beginning of his career - an unavoidable makeshift solution to the "actual" task. On the other hand, his comments once again show a complete lack of knowledge about the thoughts and feelings of organized labour. He measured them with his own yardstick; he believed that what impressed him so massively - the demonstration of power and violence - must also be a sure means of impressing and carrying away the organized workers. And finally, it shows that fascism was forced from the outset to come into conflict with the other bourgeois parties and associations, to compete with them to get its cadres out of their sphere of influence.

This meant, however, that fascism also brought its pseudo-socialist, demagogic "anti-capitalist" phraseology to the most diverse strata of the petty bourgeoisie - officers and non-commissioned officers, students, pupils, the "national" intelligentsia, small traders and small businessmen, employees and civil servants - who had previously only been staunchly "national". He also brought in his pseudo-socialist, demagogic, "anti-capitalist" phraseology, not turning them into socialists, but breaking down the ideological barriers that had previously made most of them shy away from the word "socialism" alone. In this way, he ensured that the idea of professing any kind of socialism ceased to be a taboo in broader sections of the middle classes.

This alone was irritating for many upper middle-class people and was perceived by them as a pacemaker service for "Bolshevism". In 1922, the management of the Augsburg-Nuremberg machine factory (MAN), which belonged to the Haniel Group, refused to support the NSDAP financially on the grounds that Hitler "would not win over the workers, but would contaminate petty bourgeois and student circles with his pseudo-socialist ideas".⁸⁶ The German national textile industrialist Abraham Frowein - one of the DNVP's most potent financiers - even worried about the undesirable effects of the Deutschvölkische's anti-Semitic propaganda; he wrote to DNVP chairman Hergt on July 8, 1922 that he feared that the Deutschvölkische's agitation would ultimately turn not only against the capital of Jewry, but against capital in general.⁸⁷

Here we can see the causes of the irritations that repeatedly arise in the relationship between the monopoly bourgeoisie and the fascist movement it has raised. Fascism is supposed to nationalize the socialist workers for the purposes of the ruling class. To do this, it must appear before the masses as "national socialism" and seek to distinguish itself from the workers' parties as the better representative of workers' interests [120]. This is impossible, however, because the commandment to oppose the class struggle and to proclaim and practice the "national community", the cooperation of workers and entrepreneurs, is imposed on it as an insurmountable barrier.

This antinomic relationship between task and solution conditions leaves only two possibilities open: Either the commandment is disregarded in favor of the task, or the solution of the task is renounced for the sake of compliance with the commandment. This objectively given either/or is the basis for the appearance of two basic currents in both Italian and German fascism. One - the leading and dominant one - emphasizes the first part of the word "national socialist" and declares without further ado that the solution of "national" problems, which is understood to mean external expansion, is a prerequisite for "socialism" at home. The other is based on the experience that no ideological conquests of any significance can be made in the working class in this way and places the emphasis of agitation and propaganda on "socialist" demagoguery.

⁸⁶ ZStA Potsdam, ADV, no. 258, p. 243; Claß' message to Tafel dated June 8, 1921.

⁸⁷ Ibid., DNVP, vol. 3, pp. 30 ff.

In this inescapable alternative lies the whole secret of the emergence, the aspirations and the eventual defeat of the Strasser wing in the NSDAP. The Strasser wing - these were the Nazi leaders who took the solution of both parts of the double task seriously, i.e. *also* the ideological conquest of the workers for fascism, and who drew the consequence of using all necessary means to achieve this goal, even those that meant transgressing the above-mentioned commandment, such as the founding of fascist "trade unions" and the - albeit only exceptional - participation in company wage struggles. For Gregor Strasser and his party supporters, however, these were only means to achieve the common fascist goal of destroying the workers' movement. The method by which they sought to achieve this goal, however, gave them the outward appearance of advocates of a "national" workers' movement, which did not eliminate class struggle, but rather gave it a nationalist sign and sanctioned it. However, this was bound to meet with fierce resistance from those circles in Ruhr heavy industry that the NSDAP

The reason they were the first to support this party was precisely because they expected it to wage a relentless struggle against the trade unions and saw its sole task as instilling the "national idea" in the workers.

Strasser's tactic of gaining the trust of the working class by adapting as far as possible to the thinking and feelings of the organized workers was therefore the reason why Gregor Strasser, who began his political career as a follower of Ludendorff and as a representative of the Ruhr industry in the NSDAP, ended it as a partner of General von Schleicher and representative of the interests of the "modern", especially the chemical industry.⁸⁸

However, Strasser's tactics provide no basis for describing the Strasser wing as a "genuinely socialist" wing of the NSDAP, as is common in bourgeois literature. However, it is also not - as Reinhard Kühnl believed in his early study on "The National Socialist Left" - the direction of "an independent petty-bourgeois socialism in the NSDAP"⁸⁹ ; its labeling as the "NS-[121]Left" is also fundamentally incorrect, because it takes appearance for reality. The Strasser wing (like Goebbels as Gauleiter in Berlin before 1933) pursued an even more unrestrained social demagoguery than the Munich leadership, but for the sake of achieving the same goals.

By and large, the Munich party leadership⁹⁰ followed a course that was determined by placing the imperative of "national community propaganda" higher than the task of penetrating the ranks of organized labour. In its appeals to the workers, it therefore as a rule scrupulously avoided any "class struggle" tones and relied primarily on the effect of revanchist anti-Versailles propaganda and anti-Semitic agitation. Only in very acute situations, such as the November 1932 election campaign, did it toe the Strasser line when it gave the green light for the NSBO to take part in the Berlin transport workers' strike. Hitler was rebuked by Reich President von Hindenburg for violating this commandment, and he responded with the telling statement: "People are very bitter. If I had stopped my people from taking part, the strike would have taken place after all, but I would have lost my supporters among the workers; that would not have been an advantage for Germany either."⁹¹

This direction not only calmly accepted the fact that the hoped-for masses of workers did not materialize, but that masses of petty bourgeoisie flocked to the NSDAP,⁹² but also concentrated, after the experience

⁸⁸ See Kurt Gossweiler, *Die Rolle der deutschen Monopolbourgeoisie bei der Herbeiführung der Röhm-Affäre 1934*, phil. Diss., Berlin 1963, p. 287 ff.

⁸⁹ Reinhard Kühnl, *Die nationalsozialistische Linke 1925-1930*, Meisenheim a. G. 1966, p. 260 - [121] Kühnl's characterization also does not apply to the wing of the NSDAP led by Otto Strasser that split off in 1930.

⁹⁰ Strictly speaking, the term "Munich party leadership" is incorrect, because Gregor Strasser was the second man in it after Hitler until December 1932. The movement would also be incorrectly described as the "Hitler movement" because its main representative was not Hitler but Hermann Göring, who was still an intimate friend of Fritz Thyssen at the time.

⁹¹ Quoted from *Documents on German History 1929-1933*, p. 83.

⁹² Winkler's thesis that the "desocialization" of the NSDAP was the condition for the middle classes to join the NSDAP does not stand up to scrutiny; it objectively serves to explain the connection between Hitler's and Feder's weakening comments on the 25 points and the demands of the big capitalist and Junkerist

The Munich party leadership's line was to target its advertising at the urban and rural middle classes, regardless of the rivalries and tensions this caused with the German national "allies". The Munich party leadership's line was the one imposed on it by the most reactionary forces of the ruling class - the Ruhr industrialists and the Junkers - as a prerequisite for the granting of financial and political support.

The final decision in favor of this line was made outside the NSDAP, namely in the struggle between the main groupings of the monopoly bourgeoisie, in which the Schwerin-Industry-Junkertum coalition prevailed over the grouping led by IG Farben. Göring's victory over Strasser in December 1932 was basically just a reenactment of this decision made outside the NSDAP.⁹³ The history of the development of German and Italian fascism proves that the attempts undertaken by it in the interests and on behalf of the most reactionary circles of the ruling [122] class to solve the double task of terrorizing the organizations of the working class and ideologically winning over the working class did not fail by chance, but by law.

Of course, this statement does not mean that it is impossible for fascism to make ideological conquests in the working class.⁹⁴ Under capitalist conditions, it will never succeed in wresting the *entire* working class from the influences of bourgeois ideology and raising it to the level of class-conscious fighters against capital. This is already contradicted by the structural nature of the working class, of which Lenin said that capitalism would not be capitalism "if the 'pure' proletariat were not surrounded by a mass of extraordinarily diverse transitional types from proletarian to semi-proletarian ... if there were not within the proletariat itself subdivisions into more or less developed stratifications, divisions and compatriots, according to professions, sometimes according to denominations, etc."⁹⁵

Even the most sophisticated "propaganda" could not deceive the class-conscious organized workers that fascism was their mortal enemy, the representative of their organizations, the strangler of their hard-won social and political rights, that the fascist gangs represented the murderous dogs of capital against the working class. The workers were and remained the main force in the struggle against fascism.

Let us summarize once again: In Italy, as in Germany, the fascist mass movement demonstrably did not arise as an autonomous movement of the petty bourgeoisie, but as a movement that owed its origin to a new kind of political need of the most reactionary circles of the ruling class, namely the two-sided need for the destruction of the workers' movement *and the* ideological conquest of large sections of the working class in one, above all those sections that had hitherto followed the workers' parties. This complex ambivalent need was a typical product of the new conditions of existence of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the stage of the general crisis of capitalism.

The NSDAP's sponsors (Heinrich August Winkler, Mittelstandsbewegung oder Volkspartei? Zur sozialen Basis der NSDAP, in: Faschismus als soziale Bewegung, ed. by Wolfgang Schieder, Hamburg 1976, p. 102).

⁹³ Gossweiler, Röhm Affair, p. 343 ff.

⁹⁴ A certain criterion for the Nazi influence among the workforce is the number of members of the "National Socialist Works Cell Organization" (NSBO), which was founded in 1929. In March 1931 it had 4131 members, in December 39,316; by the end of 1932 it had 300,000 members, most of whom were salaried employees and civil servants (at the post office, Reichsbahn, banks and insurance companies). In the works council elections in spring 1931, the NSBO list received 0.5 percent of the votes cast (the figures are taken from: Hans-Gerd Schumann, Nationalsozialismus und Gewerkschaftsgedanke. The destruction of the German trade union movement and the construction of the "Deutsche Arbeitsfront", Hanover/Frankfurt a. M. 1958, p. 167 f.; Hermann Roth, Die national-sozialistische Betriebszellenorganisation (NSBO) von der Gründung bis zur Röhm-Affäre [1928 bis 1934], in: JfW, 1978/I, p. 54; for the results of the works council elections: Gewerkschaftszeitung. Organ of the General German Trade Union Confederation. 48/1931, S. 759). - The number of workers who voted for the NSDAP is estimated even by bourgeois authors to be no more than a quarter of all NSDAP voters (see Kühnl, Der deutsche Faschismus, p. 99, Doc. 58).

⁹⁵ V. I. Lenin, Der "linke Radikalismus", die Kinderkrankheit im Kommunismus, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 31, Berlin 1959, S. 60.

The previous spectrum of political parties of the ruling class lacked a type of organization that would have been able to take it into account. This new type of political need called for a new type of political organization of the ruling class.

[123] Under capitalism, the law of demand and supply also applies to politics. The new type of organization emerged out of necessity after the demand for it had made itself felt strongly and clearly enough on the political market. However, it did not emerge as a ready-made entity, but developed from various organizational germs that came into being in response to the demand that had become noticeable in the long term.

The new need within the monopoly bourgeoisie not only gave rise to fascism in Italy and Germany, but also shaped its program and its characteristic features.

In its goal of destroying the workers' movement and eliminating bourgeois democracy, fascism agreed in principle with the old bourgeois right-wing parties; however, the further goal of ideologically "wresting the workers from Marxism" forced it to conceal its counter-revolutionary character and present itself as revolutionary, anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist. As far as this was concerned, only a section of the conservative forces - the so-called "Young Conservatives" - were prepared to accept that the ruling class had to resort to "revolutionary" mimicry in order to remain in power. However, due to their inability to free themselves from their own elitist thinking, they remained inconsistent by remaining uncomprehending and rejecting precisely what was most important for the ruling class, the appeal to the masses, the effort to create a basis in the masses.⁹⁶

Neither in Italy nor in Germany did fascism succeed in breaking into the working class before it came to power. The vast majority of workers remained anti-fascist.

However, the history of the Italian and German fascist parties not only proved the insolubility of the "double task", but also demonstrated the unforeseen possibility of achieving victory over the entire workers' movement and all democratic forces on the basis of a militant and terrorist mass movement of the fascist type recruited from the petty bourgeoisie in cooperation with the state's apparatus of violence, and of achieving the open dictatorship sought by the most reactionary elements of the financial capital by formally legal means, i.e. without a risky coup. This meant achieving the open dictatorship sought by the most reactionary elements of the financial capital without a risky coup.

Once this possibility had been found and tested, the "double task" was no longer necessary to motivate the founding of fascist parties in other countries: the motive of the struggle for destruction against the workers' movement and against bourgeois democracy was completely sufficient. Whether and to what extent the motive of creating a mass base in the working class also played a role - and still does today - would have to be examined in each individual case.

But the history of fascist movements has also shown another thing: that even a fascist party offers no guarantee for the imperialist bourgeoisie to win the desired mass base. Although this is always their goal, it would be completely wrong to ascribe to fascist movements the ability to achieve this goal from the outset. It depends not least on the working class and its revolutionary vanguard, on its correct alliance policy, to thwart all efforts to achieve this goal.

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⁹⁶ On the Young Conservatives, see Joachim Petzold, *Konservative Theoretiker des deutschen Faschismus. Jungkonservative Ideologen in der Weimarer Republik als geistige Wegbereiter der faschistischen Diktatur*, Berlin 1978.

Wolfgang Ruge: Monopoly bourgeoisie, fascist mass base and Nazi program in Germany before 1933

Under imperialist conditions, power is in the hands of an extremely small group of financial capitalists (big industrialists and bankers), who - depending on the national and historical circumstances of the country in question - ally themselves with the large landowners, the high clergy or other numerically minor strata and call on traditional or newly emerging elites (leading military officers, ministerial bureaucracy, heads of bourgeois party apparatuses) to exercise executive power. Thus, a vanishing minority in power is confronted with the majority of the population serving as the object of power. It follows that imperialist rule can only be maintained if its exponents know how to induce significant sections of the population not belonging to the ruling class to at least passively tolerate, but preferably support the existing system, i.e. to force them into a position in which they either renounce their own interests or act directly against these interests.

W. I. Lenin already pointed out in 1910 that the imperialist bourgeoisie uses two methods or two systems of government in the struggle to defend its rule over the masses, "whereby" - as he emphasized - "these methods sometimes replace each other, sometimes intertwine with each other in various combinations. The first method is the method of violence, the method of refusing to make any concessions to the workers' movement ... The second method is the method of 'liberalism' ..." ¹ By this Lenin meant

"Liberalism" not only "steps towards the development of political rights, towards reforms, concessions, etc.", but in particular also the "*flattery* of the people" and all varieties of "deceit, flattery, phrases, millions of promises ..." ²

After the outbreak of the general crisis of capitalism (beginning of the first imperialist world war) and its full development (victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution), the imperialist bourgeoisie was forced to adapt these two methods to the increasingly intensifying conditions of class struggle, i.e. to perfect violence and deception as such and to develop more effective combinations of terror and demagoguery. In doing so, it had to take two things into account above all.

[126] On the one hand, the imperialist ruling apparatus was faced with partially modified and in some cases even completely new tasks³, which could only be tackled if there was an *actively* emerging mass base, thus necessitating a more intensive exertion of influence and a new type of organizational capture of significant sections of the population. The modified tasks included first and foremost the prevention of the proletarian revolution, which until then had only been known as an objective of the revolutionary section of the working class or at best (in the Paris Commune) as a failed attempt, but now - in Russia - proved its viability. This reality also gave rise to the completely new task of reversing the victorious proletarian revolution, including the preparation of one's own hinterland for a counter-revolutionary war of intervention, as well as the closely related, equally new endeavor to destroy the international charisma of the Soviet state and to smash the communist parties that had just emerged in the individual imperialist countries.

Secondly, the imperialist bourgeoisie had to take into account the quantitatively and qualitatively extraordinarily increased involvement of the broadest masses in political and social processes or their increased participation in such processes in the further development of its methods of rule.

¹ V. I. Lenin, Die Differenzen in der europäischen Arbeiterbewegung, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 16, Berlin 1962, p. 356.

² Ibid; the same author, Die Aufgaben des Proletariats in unserer Revolution, in: Lenin, Werke, Vol. 24, Berlin 1959, p. 48.

³ See also Class Struggle - Tradition - Socialism. From the beginnings of the history of the German people to the shaping of the developed socialist society in the German Democratic Republic. Grundriß, Berlin 1974, p. 367.

The bourgeoisie had to face the challenges of the war - the deployment of armies of millions in the world war, the militarization of areas far from the front, the involvement of all sections of the population without exception in the disputes over war and post-war, the progressive transformation of bourgeois parties from honorary associations and electoral clubs into mass organizations and, of course, first and foremost the growing revolutionization of the working class and other labouring classes. Since it now became illusory to continue to rely on the passivity of the majority of the population or on a lack of initiative in supporting the imperialist system by broader sections of the people, the bourgeoisie had to set itself the task of persuading at least significant sections of the masses that had been set in motion to take a committed stand for imperialism. The more intensive and comprehensive mass influence referred to above therefore not only meant a more sophisticated and effective use of force and deception tailored to a larger group of people. It also included a new objective, namely the *mobilization* of millions of people in favour of imperialism through intimidation, brutality, complicity in terror, chauvinism, anti-communism and pseudo-socialism.

Such a mobilization of the masses by militant forces of imperialism is also - alongside terror against the working people - a characteristic of the political movements and regimes that have gone down in history as fascism, which have emerged in a number of countries since the beginning of our epoch as a result of the search for a qualitatively new combination of counter-revolutionary use of force and reactionary mass manipulation. It is of secondary importance whether this mobilization was initiated by building a mass movement before the establishment of the fascist dictatorship or whether the fascist rulers only succeeded in creating a broader [127] mass base later, after they had come to power with the help of the armed forces, by exploiting the state apparatus.⁴ Both variants justify including among the defining characteristics of fascism - as the "Soviet History Encyclopaedia" does - its "manifold connections to a numerically sufficient part of the population not belonging to the ruling classes" as well as "the ability to mobilize and activate this part in the interests of the exploitative order".⁵

Wherever the new synthesis of terror and demagoguery could be elevated to the maxim of government policy, this was done - as it follows from the nature of the matter - by those circles of the monopoly bourgeoisie which, due to their economic and political position, were least inclined to concessions and compromises, i.e. the most unscrupulous and brutal. In other words, by the "most reactionary, most chauvinist, most imperialist elements of finance capital", whose open terrorist dictatorship is represented by fascism.⁶

Many anti-Marxist researchers of fascism attempt to falsify the nature of fascism by also including the question of the mass base in the determination of its class character and accordingly labeling fascism as a movement of the petty bourgeoisie, the rural population, the lumpenproletariat or other non-monopolistic population groups or dismissing it as a generational phenomenon or similar. In contrast, Marxist historiography firmly emphasizes that although the question of the mass base is an important issue for understanding fascism, "it cannot be of primary importance for determining its class character".⁷

⁴ See Georgi Dimitroff's statements in his speech and closing remarks at the VII Congress of the Communist International (1935) (Georgi Dimitroff, *Die Offensive des Faschismus und die Aufgaben der Kommunistischen Internationale im Kampf für die Einheit der Arbeiterklasse gegen den Faschismus*, in: VII. Kongreß der Kommunistischen Internationale, Referate und Resolutionen, Berlin 1975, p. 94, p. 124; the same, *Für die Einheit der Arbeiterklasse gegen den Faschismus* [Final Word], in: VII World Congress of the Communist International. Papers. From the discussion. Closing words. Resolutions, Frankfurt a. M. 1971, p. 247). See also Elfriede Lewerenz, *Die Analyse des Faschismus durch die Kommunistische Internationale. Die Aufdeckung von Wesen und Funktion des Faschismus während der Vorbereitung und Durchführung des VII. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale (1933-1935)*, Berlin 1975, p. 135 f.

⁵ *Sovetskaya istoričeskaja ěnciklopedija*, vol. 14, Moscow 1973, p. 971.

⁶ See Dimitroff, *The Offensive of Fascism*, p. 93.

⁷ Lewerenz, p. 136.

At the same time, it must be emphasized that Marxist research by no means tends to underestimate the importance of the question of the fascist mass base. This is already evident from the fact that Dimitroff, who developed his analysis of fascism not as an academic insight but as a guide to the anti-fascist struggle, was not content with working out the class character of fascism, but also dealt in detail with its conditions of origin and manifestations, with its relationship to the various population groups, to the traditional bourgeois parties, with the possibility of illegal work in the fascist mass organizations and with other aspects of the fascist mass base.⁸ Following on from this, all later Marxist studies on fascism also dealt with the question of its mass base. The example of [128] Germany in particular, where the fascist mass movement had already experienced its classical form, so to speak, before the establishment of the Hitler dictatorship in 1933, made it possible to draw attention to the fact that the speed, intensity and forms of the high breeding of fascism by the monopoly bourgeoisie, and thus also the basic tactical conception of the ruling class or individual factions of it, sometimes depended to a considerable extent on the mass political successes of the fascist demagogues.

The present study, which can only be of an overview nature, will attempt to demonstrate the class character of fascism specifically on the basis of its mass political orientation and to show, using individual examples, the extent to which the creation of a fascist mass base was directly inspired and directed by members of the monopoly bourgeoisie, how successes and failures in this field affected the attitude of certain monopoly capitalist circles to the fascist leaders and organizations, by what means the most reactionary representatives of finance capital tried to keep the fascist mass movement, which was recruited from working people and consequently repeatedly produced anti-capitalist tendencies, intact as a pro-imperialist instrument of class struggle, and what contradictions they entangled themselves in the process.

In an examination of the breeding of fascism by the German monopoly bourgeoisie, it must be assumed that, as Dimitroff emphasized, "the rise to power of fascism cannot be imagined as smooth and simple as if some committee of finance capital had decided to establish the fascist dictatorship on such and such a day".⁹ Similarly, it would be wrong to assume that some monopoly capitalist body had at some point decided to commission this or that politician to build a fascist organization and to provide him with a "road map" of the counter-revolution.

The reality was much more complicated. Although the German monopoly bourgeoisie pursued a relatively unified (and therefore not controversial within its ranks) *strategic* goal, namely the assertion of its economic power, the disruption of its political rule internally and the resumption of its expansionist plans externally, it was far from having a unified *tactical* concept. Mention has already been made of the concepts of two systems of governance, also referred to by Lenin as "methods" or "tactics"¹⁰, which - also according to Lenin - are developed "not out of the evil intentions of individuals and not by chance",

"but as a result of the radical contradictions of its (the bourgeoisie's - W. R.) own logic".¹¹ But not only that. With regard to the ways and means we are interested in for the establishment of a regime of rule or dictatorship, there were not only different and changing, but above all unfinished and unclear ideas among the individual monopolists.

Even those with monopoly power, such as Hugo Stinnes at the beginning of the 1920s, who drew up specific plans for the establishment of a dictatorship, left open the question of whether the dictatorial power in

⁸ See e.g. Dimitroff, *Die Offensive des Faschismus*, p. 95 ff., p. 124 ff.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁰ See Lenin, 'The Differences...' in: Lenin, *Werke*, vol. 16, p. 356 f.

¹¹ *Ibid.* - Methodologically following on from Lenin's explanations, the author of the present study attempted at the time to show in detail the predominantly materially conditioned motives for which individual German monopoly lords advocated one or other of the two tactics in the class struggle situation of 1919 (see Wolfgang Ruge, *Zur Taktik der deutschen Monopolbourgeoisie im Frühjahr und Sommer 1919*, in: *ZfG*, 6/1963, p. 1092 ff.). He coined the terms "agile-parliamentary" and "adventurous-militaristic" line in the politics of the big bourgeoisie.

The only thing that was certain for them was that in order to achieve dictatorship, a "movement" was needed and that it had to lead "first and foremost a struggle against communism".¹² The only thing they were certain of was that in order to approach the dictatorship, a "movement" was needed and that this had to lead "first and foremost a struggle against communism".¹³ However, they did not deal in detail with questions of the organizational structure of such a movement, its demagogic programme, its propaganda methods, its election tactics, etc.

Since the monopolists always have the working class in mind as their direct opponent in the class struggle and also recognize or at least sense to a certain extent their social creative power, they usually considered it desirable - as Paul Silverberg put it in 1927 - "to harness the working class to our wagon in some way"¹⁴, i.e. to secure their system through a "movement" consisting predominantly of proletarians. It was no coincidence that all pre-fascist and fascist leaders, from Stadtler to Hitler, emphasized countless times to their backers and financial backers that their value lay precisely in their supposed ability to win over the "German worker" to the "national cause".¹⁵ However, these backers and financiers could not ignore the fact that practically all of the fascists' attempts to break into the industrial proletariat ideologically and organizationally before taking power had failed and that the division of labour proclaimed by the DNVP in 1930, according to which the fascist NSDAP was to be successful among the "socialists of an international mindset", i.e. among the workers who were to become the "nationalists". i.e. among the workers, while the traditional conservative party was to work among the "private economic" sections of the population¹⁶, proved to be unfeasible insofar as the Nazis also gained a foothold primarily among the petty bourgeoisie and thus took away the old middle-class supporters. Without abandoning the goal of winning over broad working-class circles, the monopoly masters were therefore satisfied in the practical sphere with the fact that for the time being fascism only succeeded in getting a non-proletarian "movement" off the ground. Thus, with regard to a fascist mass base recruited from the proletariat, what applied to some other countries in general with regard to the mass base of fascism was true for Germany: its creation could only be tackled after the establishment of the dictatorship, using all means of state coercion, terror and influence.

The monopoly masters, who acted as promoters and breeders of fascist movements, applied the style of managerialism they had developed in the economic sphere to politics and mass demagogy in a modified form. Just as they entrusted specially trained specialists, who were rewarded solely according to the success of their activities, with the task of working out and implementing the organizational, technical, financial, etc., details of their projects. Here, they considered it expedient to leave the decision on questions of mass influence and mass mobilization to professional politicians. In Germany after 1918/19, they had no need to seek out or recruit such politicians. Within the petty bourgeoisie, the uprooted strata of the bourgeoisie and among the ambitious officers who had become unemployed, there were an infinite number of organizational experts, demagogues, fantasists, adventurers and careerists who, in the nationalist-anti-communist

¹² Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, vol. 3, Berlin 1966, p. 662 f.; Telegram from the US ambassador to Germany to his government about his conversation with Stinnes on September 21, 1923.

¹³ The FRG historian Stegmann correctly states the following about the coal mining magnates in the Ruhr who had supported the NSDAP since 1930: What fascinated these men "about the Hitler movement was the new type of 'movement' that went beyond the existing parties and agitation associations of the right. After all, mobilizing and binding masses was a goal that the right-wing parties and the All-German Association had always tried to achieve in vain" (Dirk Stegmann, Kapitalismus und Faschismus in Deutschland 1929-1934, in: Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Marxschen Theorie 6, Frankfurt a. M. 1976, p. 32).

¹⁴ Publications of the Reich Association of German Industry, 19/1922, p. 11.

¹⁵ On the efforts of the ruling class to break into the working class ideologically and organizationally, see above all Kurt Gossweiler, Über Wesen und Funktion des Faschismus, in: Kurt Gossweiler/Reinhard Kühnl/Reinhard Opitz, Faschismus: Entstehung und Verhinderung, Frankfurt a. M. 1977, p. 22 ff.; the same, Die herrschende Klasse Deutschlands und die NSDAP 1919-1923, in preparation; as well as the same in the present volume, p. 99 ff.

¹⁶ Quoted from Wolfgang Ruge, Deutschnationale Volkspartei, in: Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, edited by an editorial collective under the direction of Dieter Fricke, vol. 1, Leipzig 1968, p. 744.

spirit, offered their services in countless memoranda¹⁷, brochures and speeches, together with their visions of a "strong national state" supported by a monolithic "national community", so that the captains of industry could easily choose those candidates whose activities seemed promising for one reason or another.

This situation was extremely favorable for the monopoly owners in many respects. It enabled them to decide freely where and to what extent they could establish and maintain relations with their political agents (because that is what they were, despite formal employment contracts). Firstly, they could always remain in the background, which was necessary because - as they themselves saw it - the fascist organizations would be compromised by open financial capitalist support from the "completely bewitched masses".¹⁸ Secondly, they ran no risk of burdening themselves with the failures of the movements they were supporting or of committing themselves too closely to certain details.¹⁹ Rather, they could - thirdly - put pressure on or drop any of their agents if they acted clumsily or unsuccessfully²⁰ or [131] violated their basic interests out of overzealousness or ignorance. Fourthly - and perhaps most importantly - they were able to tolerate a wide variety of leaders, groups and factions, both alongside and against each other, so that the principle of "healthy competition" and also - as Joachim Petzold points out in a recently published study - "healthy competition" could develop.

"according to the aspects of effective economic management"²¹ had to crystallize who possessed the greatest aptitude for coping with the tasks set.

The first significant attempt towards fascism in Germany was made by Eduard Stadtler's notorious Anti-Bolshevik League. It was founded in the midst of the November Revolution (December 1918), i.e. at a time when the socially transformative power of the working class was more visible than ever before. Accordingly, Stadtler set himself the task of creating an active counter-revolutionary movement primarily supported by workers.²² However, in order to reach the working class, it was necessary - as numerous bourgeois demagogues in pre-war Germany had already recognized - to usurp the social objectives deeply rooted in the proletariat. Stadtler therefore proclaimed a "national" or

"Christian-national socialism", which was to overcome "class struggle socialism".²³

In the eyes of the most powerful representatives of the capitalist system, demagoguery taken to such extremes harbored great dangers, but in the given situation the monopolists, who were in extreme distress, had no choice but to grasp at straws.²⁴ After all, the situation when Stadtler turned to the director of Deutsche Bank, Mankiewitz, for support was characterized by the fact that the revolutionary opponents, both in the form of Ebert and Scheidemann and in the form of Hindenburg and Groener, had not yet achieved any decisive successes in the fight against the revolutionary workers. What is more. At the moment when the cream of the German monopoly bourgeoisie, following Mankiewitz's invitation, came together to listen to Stadtler's programmatic statements,

¹⁷ One need only recall Hitler's memorandum to the financiers of the NSDAP from October 1922 (see Albrecht Tyrell, *Führer, befiehl ...!* Düsseldorf 1969, p. 47 ff.) and his memorandum for Emil Kirdorf from 1927 (see Henry Ashby Turner jr., *Faschismus und Kapitalismus in Deutschland*, Göttingen 1972, p. 43 ff.).

¹⁸ See Helfferich's remarks to Stadtler (Eduard Stadtler, *Als Antibolschewist 1918/19*, Düsseldorf o. J. [1935], S. 12).

¹⁹ Thyssen comments on the 100,000 gold marks he gave to Ludendorff for Hitler in October 1923 with the words: "I did not concern myself with the details of Ludendorff and Hitler's plan. I have already said that I did not wish to interfere in politics" (Fritz Thyssen, *I paid Hitler*, London 1941, p. 115).

²⁰ Joachim Petzold rightly states: "Those who were to be promoted had to prove their usefulness and constantly confirm their suitability" (Joachim Petzold, *Monopolkapital und faschistische Ideologie*, in: *ZfG*, 3/1977, p. 299). ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 296 ff.

²² Stadtler famously declared "that the 'workers' council idea' had something healthy in it ... and that it depended on close functional cooperation between labor and business" (Stadtler, p. 70 f.).

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 10 ff.

²⁴ Shortly before the revolution, Robert Bosch had declared: "If the house is on fire, you put it out with liquid manure, at the risk of it stinking in the house for a while afterwards" (*Deutschland im ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. by a collective of authors under the direction of Joachim Petzold, vol. 3, Berlin 1970, p. 483).

the January battles were raging in Berlin, and it was impossible to predict whether they would be the prelude to a new upswing in the revolution. It is therefore not surprising that Stinnes, Vögler, Siemens, Henrich (from the Siemens-Schuckert Group), Borsig, Deutsch (from AEG), Salonsohn (from Disconto-Gesellschaft) and others, for whom the fascist demagogue had been "'some' Dr. Stadtler" just a few hours earlier²⁵, immediately agreed to provide him with the sum of several hundred million marks, which was apostrophized as an "insurance premium" against Bolshevism.²⁶

[132] A few weeks later, however, the political scene had changed fundamentally. The Berlin proletariat had been bloodily crushed in the January battles (later also in the March battles), the armed counter-revolution had triumphed in other areas of Germany and the end of the revolution was looming. However, this development, in which the pre-fascist and fascist forces had played a certain role (e.g. in the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg), was essentially the result of the counter-revolutionary activities of the right-wing Social Democratic leaders (Noske) and the officers of the old army working hand in hand with them, who were now at the head of volunteer units and the newly created republican Wehrmacht.

In view of such facts, the monopolists had to tell themselves that they had made a bad investment by feeding the anti-Bolshevik fund and providing organizational support for the League. Accordingly, they turned their backs on Stadtler. In his own words, as early as March 1919, when he presented a new, even more pseudo-socially accentuated version of his "Action Program to Overcome Bolshevik Anarchy" (as well as unrealistic foreign policy ideas), he "came into acute conflict with the financiers of the League".²⁷ When Deutsch, who had already previously expressed his "ungracious" opinion about the adoption of the Council of Councils,²⁸ took a stand against Stadtler, Stinnes and Vögler no longer supported him either.

From the defeat of the proletariat in the revolution, numerous monopoly lords drew the conclusion that the revolutionary energies of the working class did not represent such an immediate danger as had been assumed in the stormy days of November, December and January. In the political plans now being drawn up by reaction to further suppress the threat of revolution (which, under the given circumstances, initially meant consolidating the bourgeois republic) and - in the longer term - to smash parliamentarism, priority was therefore logically given to the two counter-revolutionary forces that had proved most successful in recent months - the right-wing Social Democratic leaders and the military led by former imperial officers. Accordingly, the founding assembly of the Reich Confederation of German Industry (February 1919) strongly reaffirmed the basic principles of the Labour Agreement²⁹ negotiated between the employers and the reformist bourgeois trade union leaders immediately before the November Revolution, while the National Association³⁰, which shortly afterwards became the leading counter-revolutionary organization, focused its pronounced republican struggle on the old officer corps.

²⁵ See Stadtler, p. 47.

²⁶ Whether the "historic" sum of 500 million marks mentioned by Stinnes (see *ibid.*, p. 48) was actually raised in full and whether it was made available to Stadtler exclusively for his own [132] organization or also to finance other counterrevolutionary projects is of secondary importance. What is important is that it was an immense sum (the mark had only been devalued by about 50 percent at this point) and that plenty of money flowed into the anti-Bolshevik fund in the days and weeks that followed.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁹ According to Siemens, the employers were only prepared to accept the improvements in labor law granted by the central labor agreement in order to "pour some oil on the revolutionary wave" (Gert von Klass, Hugo Stinnes, Tübingen 1958, p. 195).

³⁰ See Nationale Vereinigung (NVG) 1919-1920, in: *Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland*, Vol. II, Leipzig 1970, p. 339 f.

[133] The discussion of tactics within the National Unification was primarily concerned with the question of whether one could and should rely on the right-wing social democratic leaders to establish an open terrorist dictatorship. This discussion, which is characterized by the notorious memorandum of 18 September 1919 written by Karl Schnitzler and Wilhelm Schiele, among others, also shows that the militarist conspirators, who concluded from the armed struggles of the first three months of 1919 that armed force was more effective than demagogy, did not intend to rely primarily on an active mass movement of any kind. The main conspirator Kapp saw the task of propaganda merely as "creating a sounding board for the counter-revolution".³¹

While some spokesmen of the National Union advocated including right-wing Social Democrats in the dictatorship government, the authors of the September memorandum opposed this.³² Their concept of pure military dictatorship prevailed in the course of the preparations for the Kapp Putsch and also met with the approval of the most reactionary forces of monopoly capital. As far as can be seen from the - albeit sparsely preserved - information on the putschists' connections to major industrialists, these did not tie their financial contributions to the coup plotters to any mass political conditions, but emphasized in many cases that they were "extremely inclined" to the undertaking as it was planned.³³

The suppression of the Kapp Putsch by the united working class came as a shock to all supporters of the open terrorist dictatorship of finance capital. Their fiasco and the fact that the defensive reactions of the proletariat began to develop into offensive struggles to push back the imperialist order,³⁴ made them realize that the working class was capable of having the decisive say in the social conflict, as had been feared at the time of the November Revolution.

Even extremely reactionary captains of industry and nationalist politicians now had to admit that the division of the working class, carried out with the help of the right-wing Social Democratic leaders, was indispensable for the maintenance and consolidation of their rule. Even agitators such as Vögler were now explicitly warning against "new military putsch intentions" - at least for the near future.³⁵ At the end of June 1920, for the first and last time in its history, the otherwise strictly anti-social democratic German National Party leadership drew up a document on "coalition [134] conditions for forming a government with the Social Democrats".³⁶ The heavy industrial German People's Party went even further, namely to the realization of such a coalition programme. At the outbreak of the next political crisis, in 1923, its leader, Stresemann, who by no means enjoyed the full support of his party friends Stinnes and Vögler, took over the chancellorship of the Reich and justified his mass policy with the words: "It (seems) impossible to me ... to force them (the Social Democrats - W. R.) out of cooperation with the bourgeois parties against their own will without the most serious damage to the nation. The consequence of this would only be that Social Democracy would join forces with Communism."³⁷

However, the defeat of Kapp and his associates could not, of course, cause the extremely reactionary faction of the monopoly bourgeoisie to abandon their plans to establish a terrorist dictatorship.

³¹ See excerpt from Kapp's memorandum on the preparation and triggering of the putsch, in: Arbeiterklasse siegt über Kapp und Lüttwitz. Sources, selected and edited by Erwin Könnemann et al ' Berlin 1971, p. 103.

³² See the putschists' memorandum "Die Beteiligung von Mehrheitssozialisten an der Regierungsgewalt", in: *ibid*, P. 13, P. 16.

³³ See letter from Mitteldeutsche Creditbank, Königsberg i. Pr. branch, to Geheimrat Kapp about the willingness of various banks to support his endeavors, in: *ibid.*, p. 55 f.; see also Dokumente zur deutschen Geschichte, ed. by Wolfgang Ruge and Wolfgang Schumann, vol. 1919-1923, Berlin 1975, p. 28 f.

³⁴ The heavily industrial Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung wrote with alarm on March 24, 1920: "The Kapp regime has welded and consolidated communism anew."

³⁵ ZStA Potsdam, Deutschnationale Volkspartei, No. 7, Bl. 64; letter from Hugenberg to Herzt dated May 31, 1920.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 52. See also Wolfgang Ruge, Germanskaja monopolističeskaja buržnazija i revolucionnyj krizis 1919- 1923 gg., in: Germanskij imperializm i militarizm, Moscow 1965, p. 105.

³⁷ Gustav Stresemann, Legacy, vol. 1, Berlin 1932, p. 158.

in principle. Two insights gained from the Kapp adventure played a major role in the now - albeit long-term - deliberations within this faction and its political agencies about a coup d'état against the parliamentary republic. Firstly, said the violent politicians, the working class had to be rendered incapable of fighting,

i.e. to be divided and confused, and secondly to build up an active reactionary mass movement.

The first conclusion was initially heeded above all by the military. In order not to challenge the proletarian masses to dangerous defensive struggles and to provide the right-wing Social Democratic leaders with an alibi for their divisive standstill policy at the moment of the establishment of the dictatorship, they considered it necessary first and foremost to surround a future coup d'état - in contrast to the Kapp Putsch - with the appearance of the rule of law. General von Seeckt, for example, followed this reasoning when he established a constitutionally disguised military dictatorship in the fall of 1923.

The fighting power of the working class demonstrated in the suppression of the Kapp Putsch prompted numerous monopoly masters, in their attempts to build up an active reactionary mass movement, to turn increasingly to the promotion of those extreme right-wing organizations and groups whose declared aim was to break into the proletariat.

From no other period in German history are so many statements by industrialists and right-wing politicians about the need to "fight for the workers" known as from the time after the Kapp Putsch. In a book written in 1921, Ludendorff ranted about the "misfortune" that had always existed, that "the majority of employers had not found the right tone towards the workers"³⁸ and the former German crown prince hoped to lure the workers with a "parity-based (in reality counter-revolutionary - W. R.) expansion of the idea of councils".³⁹ During discussions about the possible merger of the German National Party and the German People's Party, the main leader of the DNVP, Lindeiner-Wildau, strictly opposed such a project because the DVP was "too capitalist" and therefore "not suitable for a successful struggle for the German working class ... not suitable".⁴⁰ In a report to DNVP chairman Hergt in 1921, Duesterberg, the leader of the Stahlhelm and German nationalist state chairman with close ties to big industry, discussed the prospects of another right-wing putsch and wrote: "If a violent upheaval were to succeed anywhere in the Reich, one must unfortunately still admit today that almost the entire working class in our district (Halle-Merseburg - W. R.) would immediately go on general strike and also violently oppose the introduction of a different system of government. As far as one can judge from Halle, the situation is similar in Thuringia and in the former Kingdom of Saxony. As regrettable as it is, one must reckon with these facts and can only hope⁴¹ that through continued hard work it will gradually be possible to wrest at least some of the workers from the socialist gangs."⁴²

Particularly revealing are those documents in which the direct connection between the mass political conception of fascism and its financing by the big bourgeoisie is pointed out. In June 1921, for example, the chairman of the Alldeutscher Verband, Claß, wrote to the factory owner Tafel, who was a member of both the board of the ADV and the board of the Bavarian Industrialists' Association: "During these days, Hitler and the managing director of the 'Völkischer Beobachter' came to see me to see if they could get money. Of course I was not in a position to do so, but I promised that I would make an effort with the appropriate authorities. I did so immediately, but with a strange success. I was told that there were

³⁸ See Erich Ludendorff, *Kriegführung und Politik*, Berlin 1922, p. 48.

³⁹ ZStA Potsdam, Deutschnationale Volkspartei, No. 4, Bl. 80; Lindeiner-Wildau's report on his visit to the Crown Prince in Holland on October 23, 1920.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 79.

⁴¹ For this word, see next page.

⁴² ZStA Potsdam, Deutschnationale Volkspartei, No. 4, Bl. 42; Assessment of the political situation in the administrative district of Merseburg dated 9.9.1921.

Reports by men of sound judgment from Munich stated that the movement of Drexler and Hitler was taking the same course as all so-called National Socialist attempts to date. They are not succeeding in attracting any significant numbers from the working class."⁴³

This document also shows that some of those behind the fascist organizations and groups had already begun to convince themselves a year after the Kapp Putsch that their goal of breaking into the working class was illusory. The reaction of the workers to the assassination of Erzberger⁴⁴ (later also to the assassination of Walther Rathenau) contributed to this disillusionment. At the meeting of the executive committee of the All-German Association a week after Erzberger's murder, Claß stated with resignation "that he was convinced that it was virtually impossible to reach the working class. The incitement of the workers was far too great for that. The liberation (!- W. R.) of the working class would not be achieved through assembly resolutions and lectures (i.e. through demagoguery - W. R.); that, too, was a question of power."⁴⁵ The chairman of the German National Party, Hergt, thought the same way at this time. He crossed out the word "hope" referring to the recruitment of workers in the above-quoted report⁴⁶ in red pencil and wrote in the margin: "Gradually this hope is also being abandoned - cf. Thuringia."⁴⁷

In the course of this trend of realization, which of course did not occur suddenly and could not prevail one hundred percent, Stinnes also came to the conclusion in 1923 (probably even earlier) that it was pointless to try to win over the German working class for the "necessities" of unrestricted monopoly rule (according to Stinnes: primarily for the "necessity" of the ten-hour day) and therefore a "national dictatorship" with the support of "all right-wing parties ... and a sizable group of moderate men in the middle"⁴⁸, i.e. based on a non-proletarian mass movement. Other major industrialists came to similar conclusions. In addition, leading forces of the East Elbe Junker were of the opinion that the dictatorship could only be established with the help of the Wehrmacht.⁴⁹

The renewed change in the mass political conception of the most reactionary circles of the financial capital had a very complicated effect on the relations of individual monopoly owners with extreme right-wing leaders and associations. When, after the Kapp Putsch, the view prevailed that attempts had to be made to activate sections of the working class for the reaction, the fascists again received money from the coffers of the corporations and factory managements.⁵⁰ However, since the large misinvestment in Stadtler's company had not yet been forgotten (and the economic situation of most companies was miserable), they had been content with relatively small contributions for the time being. Based on the assumption that it was necessary to find out which party or which federation could provide the best services, a rather large number of organizations and small organizations were also financed, so that - albeit also due to other causes - an extraordinary fragmentation of the fascist association structure resulted.

When it became clear that the working class could not be broken into and an attempt had to be made to analyze the factors behind the partial mass political successes of individual fascist groups, it became clear that the petty bourgeoisie provided the most favorable ground for the cultivation of demagoguery and terror ideology. In addition, when reformulating reactionary concepts of mass politics, it had to be taken into account that the petty bourgeoisie had the other

⁴³ Ibid., Alldeutscher Verband, no. 258, p. 243; letter from Claß to Tafel dated June 8, 1921.

⁴⁴ See, among others, the report mentioned in note 42, p. 40.

⁴⁵ ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband, no. 132, p. 24; report on the meeting of the executive committee in Goslar on September 2, 1921.

⁴⁶ See note 41.

⁴⁷ ZStA Potsdam, Deutschnationale Volkspartei, No. 4, Bl. 42.

⁴⁸ History of the German Labor Movement, vol. 3, p. 662; Telegram from the Ambassador of the USA in Germany ...

⁴⁹ See the details of Colonel von Seißer's conversation with the Landbund leadership at the end of October or beginning of November 1923 in Hans Meier-Welcker, Seeckt, Frankfurt a. M. 1967, p. 397.

⁵⁰ For details, see Gossweiler, Die herrschende Klasse, (MS), p. 385 ff; Walter Görlitz/Herbert A. Quint, Hitler. Eine Biographie, Stuttgart 1952, p. 168, also state that Borsig was one of the financiers of the NSDAP as early as 1921.

This was also the most likely place to expect sympathy for the use of armed force in internal political disputes.

Fascism, which at that time was by no means represented solely by the NSDAP, was most firmly established in Bavaria, i.e. in a decidedly petty-bourgeois and rural state, which at the same time was large enough to be able to intervene significantly in the imperial system. In addition (and this was also related to the population structure), anti-communism had borne particularly abundant fruit in Bavaria after the suppression of the Munich Soviet Republic in 1919, and as a result of the successful "cold coup" by Kapp accomplice Kahr, a state government had been at the helm since March 1920 that favored the growth of fascism, that the anti-Prussian particularist resentments of the population of this country could be converted into sentiments against the November Revolution and its results as well as against the Social Democratic-led Prussian government, that reactionary Catholicism was more deeply rooted than anywhere else in Germany and other things. As a result, the entire German reaction intensified its focus on Munich and increasingly regarded Bavaria as what All-Germans and local swastika figures had already globalized it as since the bloody campaign against the Soviet Republic - as a "cell of order" and the starting point of "German recovery".

At the aforementioned meeting of the executive committee of the All-German Association in September 1921, at which Claß admitted the impossibility of reaching the working class, he declared: "In this emergency, Bavaria is increasingly the confidence of all good-minded people."⁵¹ The aforementioned Stinnes Plan of 1923 also states, after describing the characteristics of the future dictator (apparently alluding to Kahr⁵²): "Such a man is ready. A great movement emanating from Bavaria, determined to restore the old monarchies, (is) at hand."⁵³

This ostensibly geographical reorientation towards the most reactionary forces in Bavaria reflected the mass political reorientation of the fascist movement towards the petty bourgeoisie. However, this is by no means to claim that the fascists had not previously made an effort to reach out to the petty bourgeoisie or that they had subsequently abandoned all attempts to gain influence over the working class. Such an interpretation would be an undialectical simplification. In fact, the fascists of various stripes had already recognized that, firstly, the petty bourgeoisie always had to be held back anew from joining the working class as an ally and, secondly, that it was suitable as a basis for the ideological invasion of the proletariat, if only because of the petty bourgeois mentality rudiments in the working class. It is important to note, however, that the basic orientation of German fascism in terms of mass politics that was actually practised from around the time of the Erzberger and Rathenau murders was primarily aimed at conquering the petty bourgeoisie.

From this point onwards, i.e. since fascism had found the field of activity that was adequate for it in terms of mass politics, what Kurt Gossweiler pointedly describes as the NSDAP's march out of insignificance also began.⁵⁴ Of course, since there were also other groups operating there, it was not only due to the Bavarian petty-bourgeois sphere of activity of the Hitler Party that it was able to assert itself against the competition and ultimately become the most important fascist organization [138] in Germany. Other factors also contributed to this development, not least coincidences such as personal circumstances or skillfully exploited rivalries.⁵⁵ A role that should not be underestimated was also played by the fact that now, with the increased orientation of the coup planners towards armed power, those organizations that had close ties to the Reichswehr or certain parts of it were particularly favoured.

⁵¹ ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband, No. 132, Bl. 9; report on the meeting of the executive committee in Goslar on September 2, 1921.

⁵² See Gossweiler, *Die herrschende Klasse*, ch. IX, note 8; ch. IV, note 1.

⁵³ *History of the German Labor Movement*, vol. 3, p. 662; Telegram from the Ambassador of the USA in Germany ...

⁵⁴ Gossweiler, *The Ruling Class*, p. 343.

⁵⁵ This problem is dealt with in the greatest detail in *ibid.* ch. V-VI.

of the Reichswehr (Wehrkreiskommando München) and were supported by them. However, this was particularly true of the NSDAP.

The rise of the Hitler Party in 1922/23 clearly shows that the promotion of⁵⁶ fascist organizations by big business was highly dependent on the mass political success of these organizations, but that this relationship must be seen as a genuine escalation in that not only did the promotion depend on mass influence, but in turn the mass influence depended on the promotion. In any case, during this period, German fascism received five- and six-figure sums for the first time since 1919.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, the rise of the NSDAP, which was hampered not least by the fragmentation of the extreme right-wing movement, and its expansion from Bavaria to the entire Reich did not keep pace with the escalation of the class struggle situation. When a new political crisis emerged in the fall of 1923, the Nazi Party only represented a power factor in Bavaria. In the other parts of Germany, an extremely reactionary petty-bourgeois mass base was not available. The dictatorship plans of big business, which were urgently needed to be implemented, could only be realized in the form of a Reich military dictatorship with (the pressured⁵⁸) General von Seeckt⁵⁹ at its head. In order to secure such a regime, at least through the passive attitude of the reformist-influenced sections of the working class, it was necessary, as already mentioned, to carry out the changes in the state executive in a form that enabled the right-wing SPD and trade union leaders to present the dictatorship as constitutional. This was called into question, however, when Hitler staged his Bierkellerputsch on November 8, disregarding the legal doctrines of the Kapp Putsch. In order to forestall a huge anti-fascist and possibly anti-imperialist defensive movement of the working class against this undertaking, the rulers who had set out to fight the revolutionary workers' movement had no choice but to take action against the Nazi chief as well.

If the fascist version of the dictatorship had to be abandoned at the end of 1923, the military dictatorship also proved to be highly questionable, as it lacked any active mass basis.

As a result of the autumn/winter crisis of 1923/24, the big capitalist proponents of a dictatorship had to realize that the parliamentary Reichswehr dictatorship had helped them to overcome the greatest dangers in the short term, but [139] had proved unsuitable to function as an organ of the exercise of power that was immune to disruption in the long term. Since at this time there was no mass basis for the establishment of a permanent dictatorship, even in decidedly anti-republican circles of the monopoly bourgeoisie the view prevailed that - as the German-national party chairman Westarp put it - in the given situation it was not possible to establish a dictatorship.

"situation and mood in the country" for the time being.⁶⁰

On the other hand, the most extreme reactionaries drew the more or less clearly articulated conclusion from the crisis of 1923 that a radical right-wing mass base had to be built up now as a precautionary measure in order to be able to make use of it in future crisis situations. The documents of the Alld deutscher Verband in particular constantly repeated: "In view of the current situation and the developments to be feared, it is imperative to maintain the national op- position outside the country."⁶¹

⁵⁶ Promotion should by no means be understood, as apologetic bourgeois historiography would have it, to mean financial support alone.

⁵⁷ Hanns Hubert Hofmann, *Der Hitlerputsch*, Munich 1961, p. 116; Konrad Heiden, *Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus*, Berlin 1933, p. 144; Thyssen, *I paid Hitler*, p. 115; Ernst Deuerlein, *Der Aufstieg der NSDAP in Augenzeugenberichten*, Düsseldorf 1968, p. 181.

⁵⁸ See e.g. Meier-Welcker, p. 393 ff.

⁵⁹ On Seeckt's government program of (probably) 25.9.1923, his bourgeois biographer remarks: "Certain (! - W. R.) ideas from big industry are visible here" (Meier-Welcker, p. 391).

⁶⁰ ZStA Potsdam, ADV, No. 149, Bl. 46; Report on the meeting of the executive committee of the Alld deutscher Verband on February 12, 1927.

⁶¹ Ibid., 131. 38; rally of the Alld deutscher Verband of February 12, 1927.

The fact that the agitating tendencies of the monopoly bourgeoisie could not prevail in the mid-1920s and that, as a result, pro-fascist and military putschist activities declined sharply can be explained first and foremost by the economic upswing and the resulting easing of the political climate. The parliamentary bourgeois or bourgeois bloc governments, which governed from 1924 to 1928 with the outwardly passive (but below the level of the Reich cabinet with highly active) support of the Social Democrats, provided a satisfactory political safeguard for the stabilization offensive of capital, the stimulation of large-scale rationalization, etc. These governments proved to be particularly useful. These governments proved particularly useful in the field of foreign policy, where the gradual reversal of the war results of 1914/18 could initially only be tackled with tasks that could be better solved with the support of foreign capital, peace assurances and democratically presented anti-Soviet cooperation than with the dictatorship's own means of violence or the threat of violence.

Under these circumstances, the tactics of the big bourgeoisie were predominantly determined by the agile-parliamentary concept over the course of about five years. Since this method of rule presupposed the attraction of the reformist-influenced sections of the proletariat and thus also required more or less significant material concessions to the working class, it was more feasible under favorable economic conditions. In the period after 1924, it also played a role that at least a large part of the heavy industrial monopolies (coal - iron - steel) were relatively stable due to inflationary profits, Micum contracts, dysentery compensation and other circumstances (e.g. export profits during the English miners' strike in 1926). For these and other reasons⁶², the scope for material concessions to the working class also increased for numerous heavy industrial companies during the period mentioned here.

Now top representatives of heavy industry and mining also concluded, if not peace, then at least a truce with the bourgeois parliamentary republic. In a manuscript expressly not intended for the press, which the [140] Reichstag deputy Reinhard Georg Quaatz prepared for the German National Party executive in 1928, it was emphasized that the "urging of economic circles (i.e. above all heavy industrialists - W. R.) led to two attempts at active participation in the government in 1925 and 1927".⁶³

Perhaps most indicative of this tendency is the well-known programmatic Dresden speech by the deputy chairman of the Reich Association of German Industry, Paul Silverberg, in September 1926. In this speech, he pleaded not only for support for the Republic but also, with a view to perfecting the bourgeoisie's flexible method of rule, for cooperation with the right-wing leaders of Social Democracy, who "with entrepreneurship and under its leadership (! - W. R.) must lead Germany and the German economy back to success and prosperity". "I therefore believe," he said, "that I can state here that industrial entrepreneurship has come to the realization that salvation for Germany and Germany's economy lies only in trusting cooperation with the German working class and that, based on this, broad circles of German industrial entrepreneurship also have the courage to conclude that the political cooperation and co-responsibility of the Social Democratic Party must be sought."⁶⁴

However, it would be completely wrong to speak of a unanimous view of the monopoly owners or even just their majority on this point. This is evidenced not only by the opposition voiced by Reusch of Gutehoffnungshütte (Haniel Group), Thyssen and Silverberg, but also by renewed coup plans by major industrialists (Reichert, Borsig, Gröbler, Bäumer)⁶⁵, which were announced shortly before

⁶² See Ruge, *Zur Taktik der deutschen Monopolbourgeoisie*, p. 1092 f.

⁶³ ZStA Potsdam, DNVP, No. 393, p. 221 (R. G. Quaatz, *Der Weg des Nationalsozialismus*).

⁶⁴ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. 4, Berlin 1966, p. 462; from Paul Silverberg's speech at the members' meeting of the Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie on September 4, 1926.

⁶⁵ Even Stresemann mentions these names (see Stresemann, *Vermächtnis*, vol. 2, p. 380 f.). Nevertheless, Turner claims that the Ruhr industrialists had nothing to do with the plot against the Republic (Turner jr., p. 65). It is also certain that Hugenberg was intended to be a minister in the putsch government (see ZStA Potsdam, Reichskanzlei, Film 2385, K 534 187 ff.; minutes of the cabinet meeting of June 4, 1926).

Silverberg's appearance had been uncovered.⁶⁶ These plans, as well as the increasing activity of the extreme right-wing big capitalists that could be observed from around this time, were ultimately due to the fact that the Weimar Republic - in principle no different from Seeckt's military dictatorship - only proved capable of representing the momentary interests of the most reactionary and aggressive monopolists, but - in the opinion of these circles - failed where it was necessary to withdraw the economic and political concessions granted to the working people in the November Revolution, to destroy social legislation, to smash the trade unions and to push ahead with targeted ideological and material preparations for war.

This was the opportunity for the fascist groups and leaders, who, after their fiasco of 1923, soon tried to make a comeback based on a remnant of their followers.⁶⁷ They again approached the top echelons of the monopoly bourgeoisie wherever they could with [141] memoranda, lectures, organizational plans and the like in order to gain their support. Hitler's work "Mein Kampf", written in the Landsberg fortress, must also be seen in this light, which was primarily a propaganda pamphlet, but at the same time played the role of a letter of recommendation to the great captains of industry. Other attempts by Hitler to re-establish contact with the actual backers of the dictatorship plans have also become known.⁶⁸

However, the Nazi leader only achieved a breakthrough in July 1927, when he succeeded in attracting the attention of Emil Kirdorf, the senior Ruhr industrialist. Kirdorf, who had already sympathized with the NSDAP in 1923⁶⁹ and can be counted among the most reactionary and militant German monopolists, was also particularly interested in Hitler's pamphlets at this time due to his personal annoyance.⁷⁰ He himself reported on his conversation with the NSDAP leader: "In four and a half hours, Adolf Hitler developed his program for me in detail. The inexorable consistency and clear summary of his ideas inspired me so much that I declared myself in complete agreement with what he had presented to me. I asked the Führer to summarize the lecture he had given me in a brochure."⁷¹ The brochure, which was calculated for large industrial circles and entitled "The Road to Resurgence",⁷² was distributed by Kirdorf to selected corporate executives. After reading it, 14 "German business leaders" (not named anywhere) agreed to listen to a private lecture by the Nazi leader at Kirdorf's home on October 26, 1927. It was a resounding success: all fourteen were "deeply moved" by Hitler's "gripping explanations".⁷³

Kirdorf himself and the other 13 monopoly lords are likely to have played a no less disastrous role in manipulating German public opinion in the following years than the notorious twelve-member committee of the so-called Economic Association, which was founded in 1919 by leading heavy industrialists and shrouded in secrecy, and which played a decisive role in the right-wing development of the Weimar Republic with the establishment of Hugenberg's press and propaganda group.⁷⁴ Both committees were made up of company representatives who were used to acting without making a fuss, stopping at nothing to implement their plans and leaving behind as little documentation as possible about their anti-popular activities.⁷⁵

⁶⁶ See Wolfgang Ruge, Hindenburg, Berlin 1977, p. 239 ff.

⁶⁷ Gossweiler, Die herrschende Klasse, chapter IX, section 4, shows how class justice endeavored to create optimal conditions for such a comeback, for example at the Hitler trial in 1924.

⁶⁸ For example, his lecture at the "Nationalclub 1919" in Hamburg on February 28, 1926 and his appearance in Essen in June of the same year.

⁶⁹ See Geheimrat Kirdorf, Begegnungen mit Adolf Hitler, in: Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung, from July 28, 1935.

⁷⁰ Kirdorf was apparently involved in the preparations for the coup in the summer of 1926 and was therefore also included in the police investigations (see note 66).

⁷¹ Quoted from Der Aufstieg der NSDAP in Augenzeugenberichten, published by Ernst Deuerlein, Düsseldorf 1968, p. 285 f.

⁷² Published in Turner jr, p. 43 ff.

⁷³ See *ibid.*, p. 70.

⁷⁴ Cf. Albert Norden, Lehren deutscher Geschichte, Berlin 1947, p. 64 ff. and Georg Honigmann, Kapitalverbrechen oder der Fall des Geheimrats Hugenberg, Berlin 1976. Significantly, Kirdorf was already a member of this committee.

⁷⁵ Progressive historians are generally denied access to the corporate archives, which could contain such testimonies [142] (cf. e.g. Joachim Petzold, Monopoly Capital and Fascist Ideology ...' S. 295).

[142] It can be seen that from this point onwards - October 1927 - more and more industrialists and bankers took an interest in the NSDAP, i.e. gave it their support - despite often expressed partial reservations⁷⁶ - and that the party found itself in increasingly favorable conditions from 1928 onwards. In May 1928, the party ban in Berlin-Brandenburg was lifted; in September, the ban on Hitler speaking in Prussia was lifted; in November, Hitler was able to appear for the first time at a mass rally in Berlin's Sportpalast; finally, in July 1929, the traditional party of reaction, the DNVP, now headed by Hugenberg, was prepared to recognize the fascist NSDAP as an equal partner in the large-scale demagogic campaign against the Young Plan.⁷⁷

This upgrading made the Nazi Party, which until then had been regarded by many citizens and in some cases even the petty bourgeoisie as revolutionary and disreputable, "presentable" (i.e. in perspective also "fit for government") in one fell swoop. "This," writes Karl Dietrich Bracher, "opened up new access to social circles and to financial and influential resources for the long-despised NSDAP, which offered the party's propaganda and organization undreamt-of opportunities for development ... A growing number of business leaders began to take an interest in the NSDAP and the agitational abilities of its functionaries."⁷⁸

The consequences of this development - illustrated here only by a few external phenomena - were not long in coming. In the state elections of 1929, the Nazi Party tripled its votes in Saxony and Mecklenburg-Schwerin (May and June respectively), won seven percent of the vote in Baden (October) and even achieved 11.6 percent in Thuringia (December), thus paving the way for the first ministerial seat in a state government. In the first Saxon elections in June 1930, the NSDAP tripled its votes again, so that it recorded a 900 percent increase in votes compared to the October 1926 elections. The sums that the NSDAP already had at its disposal at this time can be seen from the fact that it was able to send 35 special trains from all parts of Germany to Nuremberg for its party congress in August 1929, owned more than 50 daily newspapers at the end of the year, dressed and trained an SA army with the actual strength of the Reichswehr (100,000 men) and began to build up numerous business, youth, student, professional, cultural and other organizations.⁷⁹

The year 1929 was characterized by the fact that the great economic crisis was already casting its shadow and anti-communist anti-Sovietism was experiencing an intense revival under Social Democrat-[143]-led coalition governments in the Reich and Prussia. At the beginning of the year, the number of unemployed had exceeded the three million mark, tax revenues were falling, and the Reich and the states were suffering from a chronic lack of money. A bloody massacre was staged in Berlin on May Day, which triggered anti-communist hysteria and was used as a pretext for banning the Red Front Fighters' League and numerous communist newspapers. In connection with collectivization in the Soviet Union, the government, church and bourgeois mass media organized a propagandistic crusade against the Soviet state.

The increasing material impoverishment of the proletariat and the associated declassification of certain proletarian classes, the growing social insecurity of the middle classes, the increased anti-communist pressure on working people and soon also the street terror of the SA as well as the artificially bred success nymbus of the NSDAP drove fascism from month to month.

⁷⁶ In order to reduce such reservations, Hitler felt compelled at this time to "explain" his supposedly unalterable party program of 1920, which also contained side blows against private property, to the effect that, for example the "expropriation of land free of charge" would only be applied against "the Jewish land speculation companies" (see Hitler's declaration of April 13, 1928 in Manfred Weißbecker, Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, in: Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, Vol. II, p. 402).

⁷⁷ Some company owners, e.g. Hapag director Wilhelm Cuno, made their approval of the referendum against the Young Plan dependent on the participation of the NSDAP (see ZStA Potsdam, Stahlhelm, No. 44, Bl. 10; letter from Levetzow to Cuno on January 15, 1929).

⁷⁸ Dietrich Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur*, Cologne 1969, p. 176.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 182; Wolfgang Ruge, *Deutschland von 1917-1933*, Berlin 1974, p. 348 f.

new masses and made him increasingly convincing in the eyes of his patrons and financiers as a force for "national mobilization".

In the Reichstag elections on September 14, 1930, the NSDAP, for which only 0.8 million voters had voted in the last elections in 1928, received 6.4 million votes and entered parliament as the second largest parliamentary group with 107 members. This extraordinary success (unexpected even for the fascist leaders themselves), which demonstrated that it had succeeded in building up a fascist mass base on the eve of the political crisis to be expected in view of the economic situation and at the moment when the scope for material concessions to the working class was narrowing once again, not only represented a turning point in the history of the NSDAP, but also had a profound effect on the relationship between monopoly capital and fascism.⁸⁰

From now on, three questions that had previously played a major role in considerations about the promotion of parties by extreme monopolists were clarified. Firstly, this concerned the question of whether it was at all possible to activate millions of people in an anti-communist, anti-democratic sense with the help of pseudo-socialist (naturally mixed with nationalism) de-magogy. Secondly, practice had answered the question of the social composition of such a mass movement to the effect that (at least as long as fascism was not in power) it was possible to count primarily on winning over petty-bourgeois layers, but not on winning over significant sections of the working class. Thirdly and finally, with the establishment of the Hitler Party as the only successful fascist group, the question of suitability had become superfluous. The possibility of playing off the leaders of different fascist organizations against each other or dropping one in favour of another was largely eliminated for the extreme right-wing monopoly rulers.⁸¹

[144] Of course, there were also subsequent attempts by individual monopoly lords or groups to support nascent factions within the NSDAP as a counterweight to Hitler and his closest followers. However, apart from the fact that all these attempts failed in the long term (and were bound to fail because no other Nazi figure had the mass influence and organizational possibilities that Hitler had at the head of a centralized apparatus⁸²), this was a phenomenon that differed fundamentally from the parallel promotion of various fascist organizations before 1923. While the aim at that time was to give the advocates of modified tactical, mass political and organizational concepts a chance to prove themselves, such efforts by certain monopoly groups were now aimed at establishing key figures in the implementation of an already proven political line to protect certain special interests of corporations and corporate groups.⁸³

It is obvious that the NSDAP leadership and Hitler gained a certain room for maneuver vis-à-vis some of their supporters by settling the question of suitability. Now the most extreme monopolists were in some respects tied to their star agent and did not have

⁸⁰ From now on, major industrialists also joined the Nazi Party directly (for example, as late as 1930, General Director Tengelmann of Essener Steinkohlen AG, Kirdorf's son-in-law Kauert from the supervisory board of Vestag and Thyssen in 1931 - see Dirk Stegmann, *Zum Verhältnis von Großindustrie und Nationalsozialismus*, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, XIII/1973, p. 417; derselbe, *Capitalism and Fascism*, p. 78).

⁸¹ In a letter to Reusch dated June 24, 1931, Bücher from AEG pointed out that the danger of anti-Capitalist activation of Nazi supporters could only be countered by supporting Hitler. He wrote:

"This party (NSDAP - W. R.), since it is composed of elements dissatisfied with the present circumstances, [144] must, as soon as it comes to practical action, inevitably develop towards the communist side ... I am therefore an opponent of waiting and am still convinced today that one could only influence the shaping of politics through the leadership of this party" (Stegmann, *Kapitalismus und Faschismus*, p. 79 f.).

⁸² As the example of Gregor Strasser, among others, shows, only those Nazi leaders were able to rival Hitler in terms of mass influence who tried to outdo him through intensified anti-capitalist demagogy, which in the long run, however, disqualified them in the eyes of their monopoly capitalist patrons.

⁸³ On the special economic interests of individual monopoly groups, see Ulrike Hörster-Philipps, *Großkapital, Weimarer Republik und Faschismus*, in: *Die Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik*, ed. by Reinhard Kühnl and Gerd Hardach, Cologne 1977, p. 96 ff., p. 112 ff.

The NSDAP leadership no longer had the opportunity (as in the period of early fascism) to use other agents as rivals. Of course, the NSDAP leadership could not (which was not in their interest) violate the overall interests of the monopolists behind the dictatorship plans. But now, if it solved one or two tactical questions in a different way than seemed desirable to certain donors, it no longer had to fear being excluded from funding in favor of rival groups. Basically, this could not be otherwise, because more and more big capitalists representing different partial interests were now backing the Nazi Party and it therefore had to ignore such partial interests, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

The role played by the specific interests of certain monopoly groups in the further development of the links between finance capital and the NSDAP can be seen not least in the example of the extraordinarily intensive involvement of individual corporate representatives in the drafting of the Nazi Party's economic policy program. Now, after the Reichstag elections of 1930, when for the first time a transfer of power to the NSDAP could be considered a real possibility, fascists began to give the party leadership very concrete indications regarding the future economic policy of a Nazi regime - something they had never done before. The Nazi leadership had to be aware that, if it wanted to win the support of further circles of finance capital, it no longer needed to emphasize its mass political-social-demagogic conception when [145] approaching these circles (the supporters of this conception were on its side anyway), but had to try to recommend itself by committing itself to certain economic policy measures.

Previously, the Nazi Party, which was only interested in propaganda, had neither needed nor possessed an economic program. To catch the stupid, the slogans of the "creating and grasping capital", "breaking the bondage of interest" and the like. Although these primitive slogans were retained for the masses, and the reactionary captains of industry themselves advised Hitler not to go public with any concrete details of his economic program⁸⁴, internal circles wanted to clarify in detail what future Nazi ministers should and should not do under the complicated conditions of the worsening economic crisis and the acceleration of the social-reactionary offensive of big business in the economic field.

However, before we turn to the lessons that the extremely reactionary corporate masters gave their brown protégés about what their economic policy should look like, it is necessary to recall once again that up to this point it was always only relatively small, the most reactionary, most imperialist groups of monopoly capital that actively promoted fascism, most chauvinist, most imperialist groups of monopoly capital, who actively promoted fascism, while the majority of the big bourgeoisie - likewise out of sober considerations of expediency - remained reserved towards the Nazi Party even after the Reichstag elections of 1930. This is confirmed, among other things, by an assessment of the NSDAP by financial capitalist experts who saw themselves as spokesmen for the whole of monopoly capital.

Shortly after the September 1930 elections, when the Nazi Reichstag faction first came forward with large-scale parliamentary motions, the Statistical (Scientific) Department of the Reichsbank examined the National Socialist economic program and determined that it was "something unfinished and half-baked, lacking any logical basis and especially any economic understanding".⁸⁵ In response to the question of how this program could be integrated into the

⁸⁴ The major banker and former Reichsbank President Schacht, who became Reichsbank President again after 1933 and then Fascist Minister of Economics and "Plenipotentiary General for the War Economy", gave Hitler the following explicit advice: "If possible, do not bring a detailed economic program. There is no such thing on which 14 million (i.e. the NSDAP voters of 1932 - W. R.) could agree" (letter from Hjalmar Schacht dated August 29, 1932 to Adolf Hitler with assurance of his continued support, in: *Dokumente zur deutschen Geschichte 1929-1932*, p. 73); see also note 108.

⁸⁵ ZStA Potsdam, Reichsbank, No. 6788, p. 19; record "The National Socialist Reichstag motions from October 15 to 30, 1930".

The experts replied: "The motions are designed to keep the masses in line. A party that *on the one hand* flirts with capitalist business leaders (Krupp, Thyssen, Kirdorf, Abbe, Mannesmann, Siemens) and at the same time does not want to split with the socialist working class ... and, moreover, hopes for a strong influx from agriculture, but on *the other hand* does not renounce the implementation of its own ideology, must necessarily make far-reaching concessions in all directions. Their economic policy proposals [146] are therefore a curiosity that is probably unique in economic history."⁸⁶ At the same time, the experts emphasized that the bourgeoisie need not worry about possible future economic practices of the fascists: "The National Socialists tend to proceed far more cautiously and in accordance with real conditions where they themselves have the government in their hands"⁸⁷ ... It throws an interesting light on the tactics of the party when one sees, for example, how every step is omitted with regard to the nationalization of large enterprises, which is so vehemently demanded in the programme and which would also have to affect the economic leaders popular with the National Socialists. Nothing better illustrates the duplicity of the National Socialists."⁸⁸

In the new situation following the spectacular fascist election success of 1930, Hitler's previous economic advisor Gottfried Feder, who was the author of most of the party's empty economic policy slogans, was gradually sidelined. Although the Economic Council of the Reichsleitung of the NSDAP, which he headed, remained in place, all of its powers were transferred to a newly founded economic policy department of the party, in which the tone was no longer set by petty bourgeois fantasists but by full-time corporate managers (some of whom were not formally party members). For example, the director of Deutsche Bank, von Stauß, the representative of IG Farbenindustrie, Fischer, the chairman of the supervisory board of Vereinigte Hüttenwerke Gleiwitz, which belonged to the Flick Group, von Lucke (who was appointed to the management of the Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie as a government commissioner in April 1933), and Cordemann, an employee of the Siemens-Schuckert Group who was also privately associated with the Siemens family, all worked in the economic policy department.⁸⁹

As the first result of its work to specify the NSDAP's economic policy programme (in fact, to draw up such a programme), the committee presented a memorandum, not intended for publication, on "Basic Economic Policy Ideas and Goals of the NSDAP" at the beginning of March 1931, which stated, among other things: "National Socialism recognizes in *personal property* (by which private ownership of the means of production was unambiguously meant - W. R.) a prerequisite for the higher aspirations of the individual and a basis of culture ... The possibility of free development of personal abilities and the incentive of *healthy competition* benefit an increase in national economic performance ... Even today, National Socialism grants the economic leaders the right to *authoritative management* of the companies within the limits set by law for the *social protection of the working class*."⁹⁰

Leaving aside the purely demagogic phrase about the protection of the working class, the unrestricted right of entrepreneurs to exploit and their sole responsibility for economic management was proclaimed here. The party leadership and also the extreme right-wing monopolists, who were already more or less unreservedly loyal to the NSDAP, now needed to familiarize as many of the still distant big industrialists and bankers as possible with these principles and convince them that the fascists would also be able to incorporate them into the NSDAP.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ The NSDAP had been the governing party in Thuringia since January 23 and in Brunswick since October 1, 1930.

⁸⁸ ZStA Potsdam, Reichsbank, no. 6788, p. 18, p. 23; record "The National Socialist Reichstag motions from October 15 to 30, 1930".

⁸⁹ Avraham Barkai, Die Wirtschaftsauffassung der NSDAP, in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschehen (supplement to the weekly newspaper "Das Parlament", 1.3.1975), p. 9 - On the establishment of fascist economic programs after the Reichstag elections of 1930, see also Stegmann, Zum Verhältnis von Großindustrie und Nationalsozialismus p. 430 ff. and Hörster- Philipps, p. 79 ff.

⁹⁰ Barkai, p. 12 f.

practice. A period of extremely intensive contact with new monopoly circles and literally peddling to them began.⁹¹

In September 1930, the head of the newly founded economic policy department, Wagener (who had also been a government commissioner in the management of the Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie for a short time from April 1933), bought the "Essener National- Zeitung", which was renowned as an industrial organ and whose editor was Otto Dietrich (son-in-law of the owner of the heavy industrial "Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung" Reismann-Grone, previously managing director of the Rheinische Stahlwarensyndikat, later fascist Reich press chief). In accordance with Hitler's instructions, this paper was to be developed into the leading National Socialist economic organ.⁹²

Of even greater importance for consolidating existing and forging new links with big business was the establishment of an internal "Economic Policy Press Service" of the NSDAP, which from then on was the only official party source for economic policy publications of the Nazi party. The editor-in-chief of this correspondence, which appeared regularly from January 1, 1931, was Walther Funk (later Fascist Minister of Economics, Reichsbank President and main war criminal), who had made a name for himself as economic editor of the upper middle-class "Berliner Börsen-Zeitung" and had gained the trust of wider financial-capitalist circles. The "Press Service" was subscribed to by around 60 extremely well-paid monopolists (Thyssen, Peter Klöckner, Krupp, Duisberg and others)⁹³ and served them as a forum for exchanging opinions on the economic measures to be implemented with the help of a fascist government. In addition, the "Press Service" was an organizational center through which the Nazi Party received more than two million marks (according to Funk's obviously understated statement in Nuremberg).⁹⁴

A similar role was played by the "Freundeskreis der Wirtschaft" (later "Freundeskreis Himmler"), which was organized in 1932 by a confidant of the Ruhr industrialists, Keppler (a member of the NSDAP since 1927), probably on Hitler's direct orders. In addition to Vögler from Vereinigte Stahlwerke and Rosterg from Wintershall AG, both of whom are also named as subscribers to the "Wirtschafts- politischer Pressedienst", ten prominent representatives of monopoly capital belonged to the circle of friends when it was founded, including the bankers Schacht and von Schröder, the merchant (later Hapag director) Emil Helfferich and the mining magnate Hecker (Ilseeder Hütte).⁹⁵ By declaring in front of this circle that he was a politician and relied on the expertise of the committee present as far as the [148] economy was concerned,⁹⁶ he de facto gave the monopolists a blanket power of attorney to draw up the fascist economic program.

Meetings between Hitler and other Nazi leaders and leading industrialists and bankers became increasingly frequent. Although only a small number of these meetings, which were always arranged in the utmost secrecy, may have become known, it is nevertheless certain that, for example that Schacht (together with Stauss) met with Göring in December 1930 and the following month (together with Thyssen) with Hitler, that these talks were followed by others, that the Westphalian Gauleiter of the Nazi Party received 300 industrialists in Solingen in January 1931 for a discussion evening, that Kirdorf organized an exchange of views between Hitler and 30 to 40 coal and steel magnates in August of the same year, that the Nazi leader met with Edmund Stinnes in June 1931 and with Thyssen, Vögler, Brandi, Poensgen and Springorum in September and December at the Kaiserhof Hotel in Berlin and gave a highly acclaimed lecture to the cream of the Ruhr industry at the Düsseldorf Industrial Club in January of the following year.

⁹¹ Just think of Hitler's much-cited secret tour in the summer of 1931 from industrialist villa to industrialist villa (see Norden, p. 159).

⁹² Barkai, p. 9.

⁹³ Funk mentioned around 20 names of prominent financial capitalists in Nuremberg (see Norden, p. 159 ff.).

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 161.

⁹⁵ See Klaus Drobisch, Der Freundeskreis Himmler, in: ZfG, 2/1960, p. 309; Eberhard Czichon, Wer verhalf Hitler zur Macht?, Cologne 1967, p. 24 ff.

⁹⁶ See Stegmann, Zum Verhältnis von Großindustrie und Nationalsozialismus, p. 427.

The infamous Harzburg conference of Germany's reactionary elite demonstrated just how close relations between the NSDAP and leading monopolists were as early as the autumn of 1931. (DNVP, Stahlhelm, Alldeutscher Verband, etc.) and welcomed numerous now "old acquaintances" from industry and banking (Poensgen, Brandi, Schacht, Stauß), from the generality and members of the former ruling dynasties, but was also able to forge new connections, e.g. with the managing director of the Northwest Group of the Association of German Iron and Steel Industrialists, Grauert, and the managing director of the Langnam Association, Schlenker.⁹⁷

The open partisanship of monopoly lords for fascism went so far in July 1931 that representatives of well-known corporations (Krupp, IG Farben and others) - albeit less well-known ones - were prepared to join reactionary aristocrats and Junkers in a petition to Reich President Hindenburg demanding Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor. "No coup d'état", the petitioners pharisaically described their recommendation to heed the lessons of the Kapp Putsch, "and no violence are our hope, only the implementation of the highest principle of democracy (! - W. R.), that the government requires the trust of the people, that is, that the strongest national party is entrusted with the government."⁹⁸

The fact that the patrons and advocates of the NSDAP were joined by more and more (albeit in some cases still secondary) representatives of the electrotechnical and chemical industries shows the extent to which now, with the deterioration of the economic situation, i.e. the deterioration of the economic situation, i.e. the narrowing of the scope for economic concessions to the working class, the intensification of the class struggle situation and the growing impotence of the parliamentary government mechanism, even former [149] supporters of the agile parliamentary tactic began to advocate the practice of perfected violence. Symptomatic of this change of position is the career of Schacht (originally Dresdner Bank), who had temporarily joined the Democratic Party after the November Revolution, but then moved step by step to the right, since his first meeting with Hitler mentioned above - in his own words - did everything he could to bring the Nazis into government,⁹⁹ in June 1932 set up a "Arbeitsstelle Dr. Schacht" for the creation of a Nazi economic program by top representatives of the monopoly bourgeoisie¹⁰⁰, and ultimately acted as one of fascism's closest economic advisors and practitioners for many years.

However, most of the earlier advocates of the agile, parliamentary, upper middle-class tactics, the majority of whom came from the ranks of the chemical and electrical industrialists, still exercised restraint towards Hitler until late in 1932. As a rule, they were less affected by the economic crisis, so they were not in such a hurry to further reduce social benefits, dismantle collective bargaining rights, boost armaments, etc., and therefore did not push so hard for the establishment of an open dictatorship. They were able to accept the presidential regime for a longer period of time, which had become a specifically German prefiguration of fascist rule due to the political structure of the Weimar state as a presidential republic with many splinter parties.¹⁰¹ In particular, they saw this regime as a suitable field in which to develop more effective methods of dividing the labor movement and to exploit all the possibilities of right-wing social democratic standstill politics.

⁹⁷ See L. I. Gincberg, *Na puti v imperskuju kanceljariju*, Moscow 1972, p. 197.

⁹⁸ ZStA Potsdam, Büro des Reichspräsidenten, Nr. 46, Bl. 139 ff.; letter from the Wirtschaftspolitische Vereinigung Frankfurt/M. to Hindenburg dated July 1931 - See also Lothar Berthold, *Das Programm der KPD zur nationalen und sozialen Befreiung des deutschen Volkes*, Berlin 1956, p. 188 f.; Kurt Schützle, *Reichswehr wider die Nation*, Berlin 1963, p. 116.

⁹⁹ See Hjalmar Schacht, *76 Jahre meines Lebens*, Bad Wörishofen 1959, p. 352.

¹⁰⁰ Stegmann, *Zum Verhältnis von Großindustrie und Nationalsozialismus*, p. 426, p. 452.

¹⁰¹ The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4.10.1931, wrote: "Brüning's political activity can only be summarized as ... the precursor of the national dictatorship, i.e. he accustomed the people to dictatorship and enabled his successors to assert themselves with reference to their predecessor" (quoted from Fritz Klein, *Zur Vorbereitung der faschistischen Diktatur durch die deutsche Großbourgeoisie*, in: *ZfG*, 6/1953, p. 895 f.). - On Brüning's conception, see also Ruge, *Hindenburg*, p. 340 ff.; the same, *Heinrich Brüning's posthumous self-exposure*, in: *ZfG*, 10/1971, p. 1261 ff.

to fathom.¹⁰² It was also these circles who - as will be shown - were at least temporarily sympathetic to Schleicher's attempt at the end of 1932 to establish a military dictatorship with a non-Hitler-fascist mass base.

The chemical and electrical bosses were also not interested in a too rapid transition to open dictatorship because, due to the relatively lower susceptibility of their companies to crises, they could count on a consolidation of their positions within the entire monopoly bourgeoisie and could therefore expect to have a greater influence on the economic policy of a future dictatorship government the later this government was appointed. In addition, they could argue in favor of delaying the transfer of power to fascism that the dictatorship would have more chances if it only began to function after the economic crisis had passed its lowest point.

In contrast, the coal and steel lords, the major shipowners and other entrepreneurs, who had been dependent on direct subsidies from the state since 1931, pushed for the rapid [150] abandonment of the pre-sidential course¹⁰³ and the complete ousting of the right-wing Social Democratic leaders from the state apparatus. On the initiative of these forces¹⁰⁴, the Papen coup d'état against the Social Democratic-led Prussian government on July 20, 1932 was a model case for this disembarkation, which was also intended to test the extent to which the reformist-influenced masses would follow the leaders calling for capitulation and what chances existed for the creation of an effective unity of action between Communists and Social Democrats.

Bourgeois historiography persistently emphasizes that the "business leaders" who cooperated or flirted with the NSDAP in one way or another, only some of whom could be named and addressed in the present study, not only financed the Nazi party in the period before 1933, but also other bourgeois right-wing parties at the same time.¹⁰⁵ Although this undoubtedly corresponds to the facts, it can in no way be concluded that the monopolists were disinterested in fascism or - which is the aim of apologetic historiography - that they were blameless for its emergence.

If we disregard the traditional party-political ties of individual monopolists and the hitherto proven two- and multi-track nature of their political financial support, there were four closely interrelated reasons in particular that prompted the corporate powers that be not to limit their support to the NSDAP alone.

First and foremost was the aforementioned fear that the masses, stirred up and activated by Nazi propaganda, could push Hitler and his accomplices away, replace them with petty-bourgeois revolutionaries and develop the movement into an anti-imperialist force. There is countless evidence of this. Let me cite just one particularly representative and drastic statement from the "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung", which wrote on March 7, 1932: "Frankly speaking, we are much more impressed by the nationalism of National Socialism than by its socialism ... Concerns are justified insofar as the question arises as to whether nationalism will be able to fend off the hordes of supporters fed with demagoguery at the moment of political testing."

In the infamous petition from monopolists and Junkers to Hindenburg in November 1932, which demanded Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor, this concern was expressed in the words that it was important to "overcome the weaknesses and mistakes that are inevitably inherent in every mass movement,

¹⁰² It was no coincidence that Brüning, who can be regarded as the creator of the presidential regime, declared that "the dismantling of social policy was easier to implement with the Social Democrats than with the Right" (Wolfgang Ruge, Die "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" und die Brüning-Regierung, in: ZfG, 1/1968, p. 36).

¹⁰³ The "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung", which belonged to a consortium of these same circles, wrote on October 8, 1931 (morning edition), "that the system of emergency decrees, which may have been an excellent tool of state leadership for a while, ... has run its course."

¹⁰⁴ See Joachim Petzold, Der Staatsstreich vom 20. Juli 1932 in Preußen, in: ZfG, 6/1956, p. 1165.

¹⁰⁵ See e.g. Turner jr, p. 127 ff.

and to encourage millions of people who today stand on the sidelines to join in the affirmative".¹⁰⁶ The quoted sentence shows that the signatories of this petition, who were acting on behalf of a large part of monopoly capital, were confident about the solution to this task in view of their experience with the tactically unscrupulous fascists.

[151] A second reason for the reservations of the monopoly lords turning to fascism (and the parallel promotion of other bourgeois parties was an expression of such reservations) was that their misgivings about the NSDAP's economic program, which was originally purely demagogic and confused and had only been replaced by far from detailed pro-monopolistic commitments since 1930, could not be dispelled in one fell swoop. Schacht, who in 1932 was already openly acting as Hitler's emissary, wrote to the Nazi leader in April of that year that he had not yet succeeded in persuading the "powerful gentlemen in the West" to *openly* support the fascists and that there were two reasons for this. Firstly, the entrepreneurs were dependent on the benevolence (in plain language: tax breaks, subsidies etc.) of the government during the crisis, and secondly, they were "unclear about the economic program of National Socialism". At the same time, however, Schacht was able to add: "With regard to the latter point, I have been successful in that a number of gentlemen have agreed to join me in funding a position¹⁰⁷ to study the economic policy views of National Socialism with a view to reconciling them with the prosperity of the private economy."¹⁰⁸

Here again it is clear that the reactionary corporate powers doubted not so much the will as the ability of the Nazi leaders to work out and implement an economic program that was qualified from the point of view of the monopolies.

Just a few weeks before the September 1930 election, the "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" had tellingly written in an article under the heading "Who is Adolf Hitler?" that National Socialism was "capable of development" and would by no means stick rigidly to its unruly economic program. A little later, she emphasized even more clearly that the

Although the "top leadership" of the NSDAP was "forced to make concessions to the anti-capitalist vulgar propaganda", it made an effort to "provide information about its economic goals" and was prepared to "utilize the cooperation of experienced economic experts".¹⁰⁹

Financial capitalist managers, who were not as closely tied to specific heavy industrial interests as the "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" and felt responsible for the whole of German monopoly capital, came to similar conclusions - albeit somewhat later. In March 1932, for example, the experts from the Statistical Department of the Reichsbank, who had been half-amused by the Nazis' economic policy slogans just a year and a half earlier, stated soberly:

"At the top of the National Socialist economic program is the principle of unconditional protection of private property. The basis of the modern capitalist economic order is thus recognized by National Socialism. With free property, free competition, freedom of contract, the pursuit of profit and profitability are also recognized. The struggle of National Socialism is directed only against so-called finance capital or, [152] as Hitler used to express it, against grasping as opposed to creating capital. In practice, the boundary between these two concepts of capital would be difficult to find. For the propaganda of National Socialism, it is enough that one type of capital can be described as Aryan, the other as Jewish." After the experts had also pointed out other "ambiguities and unevenness" of the Nazi

¹⁰⁶ Albert Schreiner, Die Eingabe deutscher Finanzmagnaten, Monopolisten und Junker an Hindenburg für die Berufung Hitlers zum Reichskanzler (November 1932), in: ZfG, 2/1956, p. 367.

¹⁰⁷ This is the above-mentioned "Arbeitsstelle Dr. Schacht".

¹⁰⁸ Fritz Klein, Neue Dokumente zur Rolle Schachts bei der Vorbereitung der Hitlerdiktatur, in: ZfG, 4/1957, p. 821; letter from Schacht to Hitler dated April 12, 1932 - Schacht continued: "I have the firm conviction that if we work together, a complete agreement can be reached between the basic views of National Socialism and the possibility of private enterprise" (ibid.).

¹⁰⁹ Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, October 6 and December 15, 1930 (evening editions). On the attitude of the circles behind this newspaper to the fascization process, see Ruge, Die "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung", p. 19 ff.

program, they commented on the question of the usefulness of fascism in the last paragraph of the quoted study: "The *valuable forces* that lie dormant in this movement must be pointed out. The national impetus, the ideal willingness to make sacrifices, the so-called irrationalism are values that can and must become fruitful for the entire organization of the state and state life."¹¹⁰

This sentence echoes the idea, widespread among the monopolists, that the fascist leadership, which knows how to generate "a strong faith, a fervent will to improve", but "no solid plans",¹¹¹ had to be involved in the restructuring and reorganization of the state, but it could not be left with the responsibility for such delicate matters as the conception of economic measures. This brings us to the third reason why a large part of the monopoly capitalist patrons of fascism continued to support other reactionary forces alongside the NSDAP. This is the idea, rooted in disbelief in the expertise of the Nazi greats, that it would be expedient not only to include NSDAP representatives in a fascist dictatorship government as specialists in demagoguery and terror, but also to add proven reactionary "experts" from business, the judiciary, the military, etc., in order to ensure control of the Nazi ministers (at least until the fascists had shown what they were capable of). Men such as Hugenberg or Görtner from the DNVP, Papen, who was closely associated with this party, Seldte from the Stahlhelm, General von Blomberg, the diplomat Freiherr von Neurath and the like came into consideration as such "experts", whose parties and organizations naturally had to be further promoted if they were to retain weight vis-à-vis the Nazi members of the fascist government.

As is well known, this variant of the establishment of the fascist dictatorship was also practised on January 30, 1933. In addition to Hitler, Göring and Frick, the aforementioned men (as well as a few others: Count Schwerin von Krosigk, Baron Eltz von Rübenach) received ministerial posts in the fascist "Coalition" cabinet.

This shows, among other things, that the question of controlling the Nazi leaders (i.e. the question of their usefulness) was at the same time linked in at least two ways to the question of the path to a fascist dictatorship. On the one hand, the Nazis' assertions of legality, which seemed absolutely necessary for the mass political considerations already discussed, could be given more credibility in the event of the formation of a government set up as a coalition. On the other hand, this form of enthronement of a fascist cabinet offered the monopoly capital a practical opportunity for the Nazi leaders to prove themselves, which - in the event of the failure of the Nazi leadership core - would have at least left open the possibility of turning away from the Hitler-fascist version of dictatorship by switching the mass movement to other leaders (which would have been dangerous, of course). In fact, however, the development was such that [153] German monopoly capital almost unanimously declared its support for the Nazi leadership just a few months after the transfer of power to Hitler, because the latter succeeded in justifying the trust placed in it with the campaign of terror against the Communist Party and other progressive forces, with the reorganization of the economy according to the "Führer principle" and similar measures. Externally, the abandonment of previously existing reservations of individual monopoly capitalists and monopoly capitalist groups was expressed in the foundation of the Adolf Hitler Donation initiated by Krupp¹¹², the self-dissolution of the bourgeois parties and the dismissal of Hugenberg from his ministerial post.

Finally, the fourth reason why many reactionary monopolists were unwilling to support the Nazi Party on their own before 1933 was that many of them were anxious to keep their

¹¹⁰ ZStA Potsdam, Reichsbank No. 6788, Bl. 79, Bl. 82; Note "The Goals of National Socialism" from March 11, 1932.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² As Chairman of the Reich Association of German Industry, Krupp stated in April 1933: "The political development meets with wishes that I myself and the Presidium (of the Reich Association - W. R.) have cherished for a long time" (quoted from The Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg 1945/46, Vol. 35, Nuremberg 1949, p. 26).

to use the connections to other extreme right-wing political forces that had existed for years to push through their specific corporate and group interests in the economic policy of a future fascist government. The conflicts that took place at this level, which naturally became more intense the closer the establishment of the Hitler regime came, are extremely complicated and cannot be described in detail here. Kurt Gossweiler examines them in detail in his work on the prehistory of the Röhm affair.¹¹³ These disputes are most aptly characterized by a sentence from Thyssen's pen that cannot be surpassed in terms of cynicism, which makes it clear that at least the most powerful monopolists were blatantly and confidently speculating on being able to dictate their own economic programme to the fascist government. "If we agree on Hitler as chancellor," this corporate powerhouse wrote to Schlenker, "I believe ... that we could agree on the goals of his policy ... could be agreed."¹¹⁴

Although the process of turning decisive imperialist circles towards Hitler fascism, which also included the transition of non-fascist monopoly lords to fascist positions, was not completed until after January 30, 1933, it had already progressed so far several months earlier that one can certainly speak of a pro-fascist commitment of the German monopoly bourgeoisie as such for the period November/December 1932. This was only partly expressed in the much-cited petition to Hindenburg of November 1932¹¹⁵, which was signed by Thyssen, Schacht, Schröder, Rosterg, Kurt Woermann, Hecken, Helfferich, Witthoeft, the Landbund president Graf von Kalkreuth and the banker Reinhart, among others, and to which Vögler, Reusch and Springorum also subscribed. Rather, this petition was above all a symptom of the change of mood in the monopoly bourgeoisie, which found Papen's economic program quite acceptable, but had to convince itself, especially in view of the strike wave in autumn 1932, that in the long run it was not possible to govern with the presidential cabinet, which lacked any mass basis. This change in opinion is attested to by many facts. For example, a report to the Reich government on a meeting of the most influential Ruhr industrialists in the second half of November 1932 stated: "The meeting of the Langnamverein in Düsseldorf, which was probably originally planned as part of the Papen program and to support (his government - W. R.), revealed the unmistakable fact that almost the entire industry wanted Hitler to be appointed, regardless of the circumstances. Whereas only a few weeks ago they were cheering Papen, today they are of the opinion that it would be the greatest mistake if Hitler were not appointed to form a government, even if serious reasons were given."¹¹⁶ Although Papen, as his well-known meeting with Hitler on January 4, 1933, his further activities before January 30, 1933 and his entrustment of Hitler with the formation of a new government are all well known. Although Papen was still regarded as a capable political expert who looked after the collective interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie, as evidenced by his well-known meeting with Hitler on January 4, 1933, his further activities before January 30 and his appointment as Vice Chancellor in the fascist government, not a single big capitalist, military or bourgeois party leader objected when he was forced to resign as Reich Chancellor a few days after the report just quoted and immediately after the well-known planning exercise of the Reichswehr Ministry on November 25/26,¹¹⁷.

¹¹³ See Kurt Gossweiler, *Die Rolle des Monopolkapitals bei der Herbeiführung der Röhm-Affäre*, phil. Diss., Berlin 1963; see also the same, *Die Vereinigten Stahlwerke und die Großbanken*, in: J[W, 1965/IV, p. 11 ff.

¹¹⁴ Quoted from Gossweiler, *Die Rolle des Monopolkapitals*, p. 348.

¹¹⁵ See Schreiner, p. 366 ff.

¹¹⁶ According to the estate of Franz Bracht quoted in Wolfgang Schlicker, "Freiwilliger" Arbeitsdienst und Arbeitsdienstpflicht 1919-1933, phil. diss. Diss., Potsdam 1968, vol. 2, p. 137 - The confidential industrialist correspondence "Deutsche Führerbriefe" and "Veltenbriefe", which had initially backed Papen, also advocated the resignation of the presidential chancellor and Hitler's appointment from November 1932 onwards (see Werner Müller/Jürgen Stockfisch, *Die "Veltenbriefe"*, in: ZfG, 12/1969, p. 1567, p. 1571).

¹¹⁷ On this exercise, see Fritz Arndt, *Vorbereitungen der Reichswehr für den militärischen Ausnahmezustand*, in: ZfM, 2/1965, p. 195 ff. - Schleicher famously assessed the results of the planning exercise to the effect that it was impossible, "against 9/10 of the people with the machine gun" (see Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf, *Das Heer und die Republik*, Frankfurt a. M. 1955, p. 350), i.e. no dictatorship could be established without a mass base.

However, some monopoly groups initially backed Papen's successor, General von Schleicher, whose cabinet formed at the beginning of December was intended to bridge the gap until the conclusion of negotiations on the modalities of a Hitler government, but had been conceived by the head of government himself as the beginning of a permanent military-fascist regime or at least as an interim solution to ensure maximum influence of the Reichswehr leadership in a future Hitler dictatorship. On the one hand, these groups were corporations that (like IG Farben and other "new" industries)¹¹⁸ could afford to make a more cautious transition to a fascist dictatorship and possibly a non-Hitler-fascist variant of this dictatorship due to the feared anti-capitalist sentiments and actions of Nazi supporters. On the other hand, those corporate representatives who (such as Otto Wolff) agreed with Schleicher's plans to nationalize the armaments industry for rivalry-related reasons,¹¹⁹ whose object was Vestag in particular, stood up for the Reich Chancellor in the general rank.¹²⁰

[155] But the support of monopoly capitalist circles for Schleicher did not last long. It soon became apparent that the new head of government was heading for a complete fiasco on a key issue of securing his exercise of power. His concept of creating a pro-military fascist mass base, which was to extend from the reformist trade unions to the Strasser wing of the NSDAP¹²¹, failed at the very first attempts at its realization because the organized workers could not be won over to a general dictatorship and because Hitler, under the influence of Göring, Schacht and Thyssen, turned against this concept and dropped Strasser. Schleicher was only tolerated by the monopoly bourgeoisie until the preparations for the transfer of power to Hitler had been completed at various levels.

Banker Schröder from the investigating authority of the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg testified about the situation at the turn of the year 1932/33: "The general aspirations of the men of industry were to see a strong leader come to power in Germany ... A common interest of the business community was the fear of Bolshevism and the hope that the National Socialists - once in power - would establish a stable political and economic basis in Germany. Another common interest was the desire to put Hitler's economic program into practice, an essential point being that the economy should direct itself."¹²² Otto Meißner, the State Secretary of the Reich Chancellery, who had a hand in all the negotiations on Hitler's appointment, wrote in his memoirs along the same lines: "In the economy, it was hoped in particular that the idea of a classless national community, which Hitler had introduced to the working class dominated by the idea of class struggle, would overcome the previous Marxist international socialism and thus avert the threatening danger of Bolshevization."¹²³

This closes the circle from the beginnings of fascism in Germany in 1919 to the eve of the establishment of Hitler's dictatorship in January 1933: here, as there, it was the desire to secure and expand big capitalist rule that prompted first the most extreme monopoly lords and finally the vast majority of the monopoly bourgeoisie to provide their criminal and humanity-despising agents with the means to breed a mass bourgeoisie. They did this because they were afraid of the curtailment and constriction

¹¹⁸ See Frank Müller, *Zum Anteil der Reichswehrrführung an der Vorbereitung des Faschismus*, in: *Die Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik*, p. 151 ff.

¹¹⁹ See e.g. Müller, p. 113 f.

¹²⁰ See Gossweiler, *Die Vereinigten Stahlwerke*, and Gerhard Volkland, *Hintergründe und politische Auswirkungen der Gelsenkirchen-Affäre im Jahre 1932*, in: *ZfG*, 2/1963, p. 288 ff.

¹²¹ See e.g. Müller, p. 157 ff.

¹²² *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. 4, p. 606; from the affidavit of Baron Kurt von Schröder before the American investigating authority of the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg regarding the hearings at his home in Cologne on January 4, 1933.

¹²³ Otto Meißner, *State Secretary under Ebert-Hindenburg-Hitler*, Hamburg 1950, p. 276.

of their economic and political power and ultimately the fear of the proletarian revolution drove them to attempt to consolidate their power with new methods - the methods of fascism.

This truth is taken to heart by Marxist historians who, by researching the history of fascism, want to make a contribution to defeating the recurring repression in its new guise and who, on the basis of historical experience, assume that the anti-fascist struggle can only be led to victory through the complete disempowerment and overcoming of monopoly capital.

[157]

Klaus Drobisch: On terror and its institutions in Nazi Germany

The fascist dictatorship is imperialist class rule that uses open violence; bourgeois democracy is replaced by a terrorist regime that pursues extreme imperialist goals with equally extreme means and methods.

Of all fascist regimes, fascist German imperialism bore the most reactionary traits. From the very first day, it was characterized by the abolition of democratic rights and freedoms to the point of complete disenfranchisement of the working people, unscrupulous harassment, oppression and persecution of all real and supposed opponents of the regime to the point of physical annihilation. There was no means of this kind that he did not use to remove all obstacles that stood in his way and to eliminate all forces that did not agree with his declared intention of stabilizing the imperialist order, establishing his hegemony in Europe and his supremacy in the world.

Two key aspects emerge from the broad field of the use of physical terror, which was accompanied and justified by considerable ideological-propaganda efforts:

- its main thrust against the class opponent of German imperialism, the revolutionary workers' movement, and against its allies,
- the systematic development, the constant concentration and merging of extrajudicial surveillance and terror organs and their cooperation with criminal justice institutions based on the division of labor.

Both aspects will be outlined here in their connection with the historical phase incisions, whereby propagandistic activities will also be touched upon.¹

1. The establishment of the terror regime

Even before 1933, key circles of the Nazi leadership made no secret of their intention to use violence as the main component of future rule, and to a degree and extent that previous rulers had only used in situations in which they saw the entire social order they served under threat. Behind the published Nazi statements were secret elaborations that went back years. For example, when he took part in the putsch of November 9, 1923, Higher Regional Court Judge Theodor von der Pfordten had a draft constitution with him, which he obviously wanted to adhere to after the putsch had succeeded. According to Article 9 of this draft, it was intended to impose a state of siege, to restrict personal freedom, the right of assembly and the right to freedom of expression, to interfere with the secrecy of correspondence and telephone calls, to carry out house searches and confiscations, to

"outside the legal limits". Article 16 provided for the "removal of all persons dangerous to security and useless eaters", who were to be "transferred to collection camps and, if possible, put to useful work". The death penalty was envisaged for those who evaded deportation or aided escape.² The "Draft of the first announcement of our leadership after the abolition of the previous supreme state authorities and after overcoming the commune in an area suitable for uniform administration" drawn up by Werner Best, another lawyer and Nazi party supporter, in mid-1931 culminated in the sentence: "Resistance will generally be punished with death." The author added: "This means that with this moment (the crushing of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class - K. D.) the danger of civil war is banished forever."³ Both drafts formulated the main features of the later policy of terror, both in terms of the means and methods as well as the forces to be pursued and suppressed. They were published in 1928 and 1931 respectively, so that there could be no doubt about the character of future rule.

¹ See Istorija fašizma v Zapadnoj Evrope, Moscow 1978, p. 65 ff.

² Quoted from Hans Hubert Hofmann, Der Hitlerputsch. Krisenjahre deutscher Geschichte 1920-1924, Munich 1961, p. 287 ff. - Hofmann refers to similar, in part literally identical passages in a draft emergency constitution of the Alld deutscher Verband and to the influence of national conservative circles (ibid., p. 154).

³ Werner Best, ... is shot. The truth about the Boxheim Document, Mainz 1932, p. 27.

The brutality and arbitrariness documented in both of these works was increasingly practiced by the Nazis on the streets as the class conflicts in the world economic crisis intensified. Their murder squads attacked communists and other anti-fascists with knives, manslaughterers and firearms. The brown terrorists generally found the goodwill of the courts of the Weimar state, unless the police let them go.

Hitler summarized the goal of fascist terror - as he had done earlier, for example in October 1922 in his memorandum to potent financiers - again in January 1932 in front of around 300 industrialists. At that time, he emphasized "the implacable determination ... to eradicate Marxism from Germany down to the last root".⁴ As the context showed, he primarily understood Marxism to mean the KPD, but also the entire workers' movement.

The Central Committee of the KPD declared in its appeal on January 30, 1933: "This new cabinet of the open, fascist dictatorship is the most brutal, most undisguised declaration of war on the working people, the German working class! ... The bloody, barbaric terror regime of fascism is being set up over Germany."⁵ On February 7, 1933, Ernst Thälmann pointed out to the Central Committee that "there is still a whole series of possibilities for increasing the methods of this government of open, fascist dictatorship. Any doubt about the fact that this government is afraid of any methods [159] of extreme terror would be very dangerous." The KPD chairman particularly emphasized that, apart from judicial terror, countless communists would be deported to concentration camps without any legal cover and murdered in a treacherous and cruel manner.⁶ This foresightedly characterized the main goal of the fascist terror: to smash the revolutionary movement of the working class with naked violence, to eradicate Marxist-Leninist ideology with its supporters, to subjugate other progressive forces and to make the German people submissive to a criminal policy both internally and externally.

There was a significant difference between fascist terror and that of other forms of bourgeois rule in terms of dimension and, above all, in terms of goal and method - the physical liquidation and destruction of the opponent. The extreme cruelty that characterized German fascism even before other fascist regimes, on the other hand, stemmed from the particularly aggressive nature of fascist German imperialism, which sought to create domestic peace in order to be able to deal with war preparations and external aggression undisturbed.

After the rise to power of German fascism, preventive measures, terror by extrajudicial means, dominated, a characteristic of fascist rule par excellence, but practised particularly comprehensively and brutally in Nazi Germany. Along with the mass and unbridled persecution of revolutionary workers, the Nazi regime abolished democratic rights and freedoms in the first few weeks.

The legalization of terror was already on the agenda during the first meetings of the new cabinet. On January 30, 1933, Economics Minister Alfred Hugenberg proposed banning the KPD. On February 1, 1933, Hermann Göring as Prussian Minister President and Wilhelm Frick as Reich Minister of the Interior presented the so-called "Schubkastenverordnung" (drawer ordinance)⁷; this was an ordinance that had already been prepared by the Schleicher cabinet before January 30, 1933, which Reich President Paul von Hindenburg put into force on February 4, 1933 as the "Ordinance for the Protection of the German People". Among other things, it placed the press and gatherings of political opponents under exceptional law and provided for police detention for anti-fascists. On February 17, 1933, Göring instructed the Prussian police to ruthlessly use their weapons against opponents of the regime. Five days later, he deployed around 50,000 members of the SA, the SS and the Stahlhelm as auxiliary policemen, effectively granting them the powers of the state.

⁴ Adolf Hitler's lecture to West German economists at the Industrie-Klub in Düsseldorf on January 22, 1932' Munich 1932, S. 28.

⁵ Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung vol. 5, Berlin 1966, p. 441, doc. 1.

⁶ Ibid., p. 446, doc. 5.

⁷ ZStA Potsdam, film collection (in the following, films from this collection are cited without reference to the inventory), film 11 435.

Meanwhile, on February 3 and February 20, 1933, Hitler reaffirmed to military commanders and leading representatives of the economy his intention to eliminate and eradicate Marxism. On February 28, 1933, after the Reichstag fire staged for this purpose, he declared that a "ruthless confrontation with the KPD" was necessary, which "must not be made dependent on legal considerations". During the same cabinet meeting, Göring triumphantly reported that KPD functionaries and deputies had been arrested, the communist press banned and communist offices closed.⁸ An official announcement about the Reichstag fire expressly emphasized the shooting and auxiliary police decree as well as the protective custody of Communists, but without mentioning that the mass arrests carried out by auxiliary and regular police on the night of 27-28 February 1933 had been carried out according to "drawer" lists that had already been drawn up in the Weimar Republic and had now merely been supplemented.

While the first major wave of persecution was underway, Hindenburg signed the "Ordinance for the Protection of the People and the State", which Hitler called the "Ordinance for the Protection of Society against the Communist Danger" during the cabinet meeting on February 28, 1933.⁹ It repealed the political rights guaranteed by the Weimar Constitution - in the same wording as the decrees issued by Reich President Friedrich Ebert in 1920 and 1923 - and threatened the death penalty for "high treason". This put into force the basic law that characterized the fascist dictatorship until it was crushed: the political state of emergency.

With the issue of this decree, the fascist rulers embarked on unrestricted and systematic terror on a grand scale. Their motto, as Göring proclaimed at a public rally on March 3, 1933, was not to do justice, but to destroy and exterminate. 14 days later, he repeated and added: "We will not only eradicate this plague. We will tear the word Marxism out of every book. In fifty years, no one in Germany will be allowed to know what the word means."¹⁰

In this sense, police and Nazi organs "preventively" deprived opponents of the regime of their freedom. Based on the Reichstag Fire Decree, which expressly repealed Article 114 of the constitution, which had guaranteed personal freedom, they took action without - as previously prescribed by law - there being a punishable offense and the arrested person being brought to justice. In Prussia alone, around 15,000 people were constantly in "protective custody" in March 1933¹¹, not including those who were only held for a short time or who were abducted by SA and SS units.

The prisoners were usually locked up in empty factory buildings, old castles, palaces or prisons, mainly in or near large cities and industrial areas. Barrack camps, such as those near Börgermoor and Esterwegen in Emsland, were rarer at first. In the first concentration camps set up in March 1933, a merciless regime of torture and murder ruled under SA or SS command, by virtue of "Standrecht", as it was called in the first Dachau camp regulations of spring 1933.¹²

By mid-1934, the number of concentration camps had been reduced to around a dozen, roughly an eighth of the original number, due to the dissolution of small camps, the takeover of camps by the judiciary and the transfer of prisoners to larger camps. At the same time, the SS leadership established the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps under SS-Oberführer Theodor Eicke, which combined the previously regionally organized camps under the control of various institutions and introduced extended camp regulations based on the Dachau model.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ IMG, vol. 29, Nuremberg 1948, p. 27, Doc. PS-1856; Völkischer Beobachter, March 18/19, 1933.

¹¹ ZStA Potsdam, Film 14 929; unsigned memo from the Prussian Ministry of the Interior for the Reich Ministry of the Interior from June 1933 - In July 1933 there were still 15,000 people in protective custody in Prussia, 4,500 in Saxony, 4,100 in Bavaria and a total of around 26,800 in the Reich territory" (ibid., Film 19 609).

¹² IMG, vol. 36, Nuremberg 1949, p. 7, doc. D-922.

[161] Looking back, in May 1944 the "Reichsführer SS" Heinrich Himmler told lawyers that in 1933 "the harsh measures (the mass arrests and the establishment of concentration camps - K. D.) were carried out without a legal basis". The previous day, he had added to a similar statement to generals that this had "often not been understood at the time".¹³ He was alluding to the fact that in 1933 the procedure was still relatively unregulated and arbitrary and that those at home and abroad who thought in terms of previous legal concepts took offense above all at this unbridled approach of the Nazi and police authorities. To counter this, the regime increasingly sought to describe its atrocities in normative terms. Ministry officials and lawyers, who had often already served the Weimar state in the same field, were in charge of this, together with SS and police officers, often young academics, who were newly appointed to office or set up the new organs of terror. In this way, many years of experience and conventional forms of persecuting the enemy were combined with the brute intention of destroying them. The legally disguised and institutionalized procedure, whether by police bodies or judicial institutions, ultimately remained outright arbitrariness and naked injustice.

With regard to protective custody, administrative lawyers standardized and expanded the procedures in the individual states. A decree issued by the Reich Ministry of the Interior in April 1934 stipulated that it was primarily the Secret State Police Office and its regional offices as well as higher authorities in Prussia and similar authorities in other states that were allowed to impose preventive detention.¹⁴

The Secret State Police Office emerged from Department IA at the Berlin Police Headquarters, which was the de facto political police headquarters in Prussia during the Weimar Republic. Göring had this department dissolved and expanded in February 1933, in particular by adding a department for "combating communism". It was immediately given executive powers "to ensure the effective combating of all efforts directed against the existence and security of the state".¹⁵ The head of the security service, Reinhard Heydrich, also took over the political department of the police in Munich in March 1933. Similarly, in the other parts of the country, the political police organs were made independent and in some cases already called the Secret State Police, for example in Saxony in July and in Baden in August 1933. Over the course of a year, Himmler, as the political police commander of the federal states, was given their leadership, including that of the Prussian Secret State Police Office in April 1934, whose direct leadership was given to Heydrich.

This completed the centralization and to some extent the standardization of the political police organs responsible for persecuting opponents of the regime. They made use of numerous informers. In addition, an order issued by the deputy head of the NSDAP, Rudolf Hess, in October 1934, instructed the Nazi Party institutions to "immediately bring to the attention of the offices of the Secret State Police" any "incidents of a political-police nature", especially suspicions of treasonous activities.¹⁶ The incoming reports and arrests were reflected [162] in regular reports from the regional political police, which were compiled centrally from the end of 1933.

The Security Service had already been monitoring political opponents before 1933. From 1933 onwards, it occupied key positions in the Gestapo, not least in the Secret State Police Office, in some cases in personal union with positions in the SD headquarters. The SD, especially its so-called Abwehr Division, continued to focus on opponents of the regime, relying on many "confidants" in ten regional sections with a total of around 30 sections. His probably first summarizing situation report from May/June 1934 included a longer section on the KPD, which was constantly under observation.

Himmler explicitly emphasized the interplay between the SD and the Gestapo in his directive of July 1934, according to which the SD was "an essential supplement to the police forces responsible for these tasks (the "state security"

¹³ ZStA Potsdam, films 3361 and 4141.

¹⁴ Ibid., film 14 929.

¹⁵ Preußische Gesetzsammlung, 29/1933, p. 122.

¹⁶ ZStA Potsdam, Film 14 355 - This results from the reference to Bormann's renewed instruction of November 1937. In December 1938, Hess confirmed the NSDAP's obligation to provide assistance to the Gestapo (ibid.).

- K. D.) entrusted to state law enforcement agencies". "The principle for the clear separation of work areas in the cooperation between the state police authorities and the SD is: a) that the state police authorities ward off the enemies of the Nazi state and fight them, b) that the SD identifies the enemies of the Nazi idea and encourages the state police authorities to fight and ward them off."¹⁷ At the end of 1934/beginning of 1935, a study by the Berlin-Charlottenburg Police Institute stated that the SD "assisted the official apparatus of the Political Police as an auxiliary organ" in order to carry out the tasks of the Gestapo - according to fascist parlance: Investigation of political crimes, police protection of the state, researching and combating all anti-state endeavors as well as investigating political views among the people and observing political life as a whole, "since the Political Police is not as ramified as the SD". If the SD requested "a police measure, the Political Police must comply with the request". The text went on to say that, according to the instructions of the Reichsführer SS, the SD was an "important organ of state security" alongside the Political Police.¹⁸

Other institutions that mainly or partially spied on political opponents during this time and recommended executive measures included the "Research Office" of the Reich Aviation Ministry, which intercepted telephone and radio traffic; local and regional NSDAP organs, which reported monthly on the political situation in their area; the government and chief presidents, who based their reports on reports from district councils and mayors; the German Labor Front, which from mid-1933 The local and regional organs of the NSDAP, which reported monthly on the political situation in their area; the government and chief presidents, who based their reports on reports from the district councils and mayors; the German Labor Front, which from mid-1933 had an SA and SS liaison staff, later an Abwehramt (later [163] Amt Information), which above all investigated anti-state activities in the factories and monitored the political attitudes of the workers.¹⁹

The main task of exceptional courts, initially above all the special courts set up in each judicial district in March 1933, which sentenced violations of the ordinance of February 28, 1933 without appeal, was to destroy political opponents under judicial cover in accelerated proceedings. The first death sentences against communists were handed down by the Schleswig- Holstein Special Court after a trial from May 8 to June 2, 1933. In April of the same year, the so-called People's Court - proposed by Frick in agreement with Hitler in January 1934 - was established as the supreme special court, which had jurisdiction in the first and last instance for high treason and treason cases.

In general, the principle laid down by Reich Minister of Justice Franz Gürtner applied to the criminal justice system: the regime regarded "every attack on the interests of the national community, every violation of the demands of the national moral order, as injustice. Injustice is therefore also possible in Germany in future where no law threatens it with punishment."²⁰ His State Secretary Roland Freisler declared that even the "will" of the enemy, "which threatens the existence, strength and peace of the people from within", was to be "destroyed": "If criminal law is to fulfill its purpose of protecting the people, it must attack this enemy will, destroy it."²¹

¹⁷ In May 1935, 1419 members of the SS were employed in the Sicherheitshauptamt (Security Main Office), as it had been called since January of that year (ibid., film 14 455). The number of SD members rose to 5050 by January 1938 and to 7230 by December 1938 (Alwin Ramme, *Der Sicherheitsdienst der SS. Zu seiner Funktion im faschistischen Machtapparat und im Besatzungsregime des sogenannten Generalgouvernements Polen*, Berlin 1970, p. 53). The 607 male members of the Secret State Police Office and the Gestapo in Prussia in June 1935 cannot be put in relation to this, as the number is obviously only a partial figure (Friedrich Zipfel, *Kirchenkampf in Deutschland 1933-1945. Religionsverfolgung und Selbstbehauptung der Kirchen in der nationalsozialistischen Zeit*, (West) Berlin 1965, p. 159). At the same time (May 1935), there were 2241 members of the guard force in the concentration camps (ZStA Potsdam, Film 14 451).

¹⁸ ZStA Potsdam, Film 14 354.

¹⁹ The interplay between the Gestapo, the Security Service, the Foreign Office, diplomatic missions and NSDAP institutions vis-à-vis emigrants, which cannot be traced here, should at least be mentioned.

²⁰ Franz Gärtner, *Der Gedanke der Gerechtigkeit in der deutschen Strafrechtserneuerung*. Lecture given at the XV International Criminal Law and Prison Congress on August 18, 1935 in Berlin, in: Franz Gärtner/Roland Freisler, *Das neue Strafrecht. Fundamental Thoughts on the Escort*, Berlin 1935, p. 23.

²¹ Roland Freisler, *Das neue Strafrecht als nationalsozialistisches Bekenntnis*, in: Gärtner/Freisler, p. 134.

This intention of annihilation permeated newly enacted criminal laws, e.g. the law amending provisions of criminal law and criminal procedure of April 1934, the debates of the Criminal Law Commission and the Criminal Procedure Commission, as well as sentencing practice in political proceedings and the execution of sentences.

The fact that political prisoners were handed over to the political police for "protective custody" at the end of their sentences, as the Prussian Ministry of Justice instructed in May 1934²², and that the Reich Ministry of Justice took over and maintained the concentration camps in Emsland from April 1934, was already symptomatic of the interplay between the repressive organs during this period. Furthermore, the Reich Court approved the extensive interpretation of the ordinance issued on February 28, 1933 and the threat of the death penalty for high treason contained therein. The Prussian Higher Administrative Court ruled that all Gestapo decrees were exempt from review by the administrative courts.

Last but not least, propaganda helped to publicize terror measures and spread fear. Publications about arrests, concentration camps and trials proliferated, especially in the early days. In addition, there were rumors of mistreatment, murders and concentration camp atrocities.

While the first weeks of fascist rule were still dominated by random terror, which in part resembled the actions of the Nazis against political opponents before 1933, [164] from the end of February 1933 it became increasingly channelled, institutionalized and bureaucratized. While initially Hitler, Göring, Frick, Himmler and other fascist leaders at ministerial rank and in central NSDAP functions were largely responsible for initiating political persecution, subordinate authorities subsequently expanded the terror into a system. However, as early as 1933/34, when the centrally managed and interlocking terror apparatus was only just beginning to take shape, the dimensions and brutality of the terror had taken on a completely new quality, however much the system was to prove to be expandable and perfect.

2. Expansion of the terror system with a view to war

In May 1933, SS-Gruppenführer Kurt Daluge, head of the police department in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, and Oberregierungsrat Rudolf Diels, inspector of the Prussian Secret State Police Office, pursued the idea of taking the political police into Reich administration. The Reich Minister of the Interior had the plans expanded so that the Prussian Secret State Police Office would become the Secret Police Office of the Reich and the Prussian State Criminal Police Office would become the Reich Criminal Police Office and both would be placed under the Ministry of the Interior.²³ The Law on the Reorganization of the Reich, which was drafted in November 1933 and enacted in January 1934, finally stipulated that the rights of the federal states - including those over the police - were to be transferred to the Reich government. Significant steps had already been taken in this direction for the political police.

In the spring of 1936, after a phase of internal consolidation of the regime and the start of forced preparations for war, a draft Hitler decree on the centralization of police power in the Reich was formulated in the Reich Ministry of the Interior and passed in June of the same year. The decree appointed Himmler as head of the police "for the uniform consolidation of police duties in the Reich". From then on, his official title was "Reich Chief of the SS and Chief of the German Police in the Reich Ministry of the Interior".²⁴

A few days later, Himmler ordered a reorganization of the police. Political and criminal police were combined in the Main Office of the Security Police under Heydrich, who remained head of the SD. From October 1936, the Prussian Secret State Police Office assumed the duties of the Political Police Commander of the Länder. At the middle level, inspectors of the security police coordinated the uniformly designated state police and criminal police offices and ensured their interaction with the administrative authorities, military departments and the SD.

²² IML/ZPA, PSt. 3/271.

²³ ZStA Potsdam, Film 14 355.

²⁴ RGBI., 1936/I, p. 487.

NSDAP institutions. The function of the inspectors was assumed by the heads of the SD-Oberabschnitte, so that the SD was present at all levels within the structure of the Security Police and unified leadership of all three branches of the surveillance and enforcement apparatus was guaranteed.

The main impetus for centralization and standardization was the transition to accelerated war preparations in 1935/36, to which accompanying measures were explicitly related: the expansion of the terror apparatus, especially to businesses, the [165] construction and expansion of large concentration camps and the establishment of an arrest register (A-Kartei).

In the spring of 1935, the Armaments Advisory Board of the Reich Ministry of the Armed Forces obtained suggestions from monopoly companies and expanded the factory security of large companies. From the end of 1937, this was under Himmler's security police supervision, which he entrusted to the Gestapo offices in March 1938. In the companies, the management of plant security was in the hands of counterintelligence officers, usually senior company managers. The "Guidelines for the Security Police Activities of the Counterintelligence Officers" issued by the Secret State Police Office, apparently before September 1939, stated that the task of the individual officer as an "auxiliary organ of the Secret State Police" was to "a) to immediately inform the Secret State Police of all observations and findings of subversive activities within his company or area of responsibility, b) to act as a reporting office for the company management for all treason and sabotage matters, c) to follow the instructions of the Secret State Police to prevent and combat subversive activities". He was to pay particular attention to "unrest, incitement, acts of treason and sabotage" as well as to "past and present enemies of the state of all political persuasions", which "represent constant sources of danger for the smooth implementation of the economic program, especially in times of tension".²⁵

The construction of large concentration camps, which began in mid-1936, was based from the outset on the premise that they would have to "meet the needs of war to a greater extent".²⁶ They were not only intended to accommodate thousands of prisoners from smaller camps, but also to be equipped for further arrests, especially if the planned war was unleashed, and also to provide space for the stationing of a regimental SS Death's Head standard. As can be proven for Sachsenhausen, military departments had a say in the choice of location. With this in mind, Dachau was enlarged in 1936, Sachsenhausen was built in July 1936, Buchenwald a year later, Flossenbürg in May 1938, Mauthausen in August and Ravensbrück in November of the same year.

Incidentally, in connection with the planning of prisoner-of-war camps, it became apparent how the OKW resorted to these typically fascist institutions. In March 1938, it suggested "For camp construction and camp guarding", "the experience of the Gestapo in setting up concentration camps" would have to be taken into account.²⁷ In this way, the specifically fascist terror apparatus and the military authorities were in complete agreement when it came to preparing for war.

There was also cooperation between the Gestapo, the army and the administration in other measures. In February 1936, the police commander of the federal states ordered that a register of such persons be compiled so that "in the event of extraordinary events (war), it is possible at any time to take all enemies of the state or, if necessary, enemies of the state of certain tendencies throughout the entire national territory into protective custody". It was to include all those "of whom it is to be expected without further ado that they will turn against their former political

²⁵ Quoted from Klaus Drobisch, Dokumente zur direkten Zusammenarbeit zwischen Flick-Konzern und Gestapo bei der Unterdrückung der Arbeiter, in: JfW, 1963/III, p. 214; see also the same, Der Werkschutz - betriebliches Terrororgan im faschistischen Deutschland, in: JfW, 1965/IV, p. 219 f

²⁶ Buchenwald. Reminder and Obligation. Documents and Reports, Berlin 1961, p. 32; Eicke's letter of October 27, 1936.

²⁷ Quoted from Laurenz Demps, Einige Bemerkungen zur Genesis der faschistischen Arbeitseinsatzkonzeption, in: Deutscher Imperialismus und polnische Arbeiter in Deutschland 1900-1945. Coll. of the Sect. Gesch. der Wilhelm-Pieck-Universität Rostock, May 1977, p. 95.

attitude and activity or, on the basis of their current attitude, as agitators or instigators, as saboteurs or intelligence agents or in a similar manner endangering public safety and order".²⁸ A further instruction from January 1937 emphasized once again that communists in particular were to be kept on this A-file. It was reorganized from July 1938. Group A 1 comprised all "enemies of the state" who were regarded as particularly important and dangerous and who were to be arrested in advance of mobilization measures, Group A 2 comprised political opponents who were to be arrested in the event of wartime detention, and Group A 3 comprised those who were to be observed or arrested in the event of severe stress tests and domestic political tensions. Colored tabs on the index cards indicated party affiliation: Communists were assigned dark red.²⁹ Guidelines issued two months later determined from which Gestapo offices the detainees were to be sent to the concentration camps Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen or "the concentration camp to be set up in East Prussia".³⁰ The arrest actions according to the A-file were included in the mobilization book for the civilian administrations, which the Wehrmacht Office ordered to be drawn up in February 1935. It was given the codes Z 1112 for Group A 1 and Z 1352 for Group A 2.³¹

During this time, the Security Service intensified its observation of political opponents and research into the mood and attitudes of the German people. Heydrich's decree of July 1937 stipulated that the Gestapo was responsible for the areas of communism/Marxism, treason and emigrants, while the SD was responsible for the areas of science, nationalism, education, the NSDAP, the state and administration. With regard to the areas of churches, pacifism, Jews, right-wing opposition, business and the press, the Gestapo dealt with individual cases in which state police measures could be considered, while the SD dealt with all general and fundamental issues. This meant, as Heydrich added in September 1937: "The task of reporting on the situation in the various areas of life can only be to report on how the National Socialist world view is asserting itself in the individual areas of life and what resistance is being encountered and by whom."³²

[167] Apart from the activities of existing institutions, whose periodic reports were compiled centrally, the extensive surveillance activities of the SD were completed by other institutions, such as the "Führer's Commissioner for the Supervision of the NSDAP's entire spiritual and ideological education", the Presidents of the Higher Regional Courts and State Attorneys General and the Main Office for National Social Welfare. The lowest level in this closely interwoven surveillance network was occupied by the block leaders of the NSDAP, who kept a household file for monitoring purposes. Their tasks were set out in official publications: "He (the block leader - K.D.) must identify the disseminators of damaging rumors and report them to the local group so that the responsible office can be notified."³³ The collectors for the Winterhilfswerk and similar fundraising campaigns also posed a danger to anyone who voiced critical or negative opinions.

In the field of propaganda, leading people from the terror apparatus were active themselves, for example Heydrich in 1935 with the publication "Wandlungen unseres Kampfes" (Changes in our Struggle); Heydrich, his deputy Best and the government councillor in the Secret State Police Office Hans Tesmer in April 1936 with

²⁸ BA Koblenz, R 58/264.

²⁹ ZStA Potsdam, Film 2939 - The extent of the A-file is not yet known. On January 1, 1939, the main card index of the Secret State Police Office had 1,980,558 cards with personal details and 641,497 associated files (ibid., film 14355).

³⁰ BA Koblenz, R 58/1027 - Dachau was possibly not taken into account because it was apparently already intended at this time for the formation of the SS Totenkopf units destined for the war effort.

³¹ ZStA Potsdam, films 2939 and 10732 - On the connections and further-reaching terror measures during the preparation and unleashing of the war, see also Laurenz Demps, *Dokumente zur Funktion und Rolle der faschistischen Partei (NSDAP) bei der Vorbereitung des zweiten Weltkrieges (1937-1939)*, in: *Bulletin des Arbeitskreises "Second World War"*, 3-4/1977, p. 52 ff., esp. p. 69 f.

³² Quoted from Reports from the Reich. Selections from the Secret Situation Reports of the SS Security Service 1939-1944, edited by Heinz Boberach, Neuwied/(West) Berlin 1965, p. XIV.

³³ Eberhard Kadatz, *Block and Cell in the NSDAP*. According to the guidelines of the Reich organization leader Dr. Ley, Dresden 1937, p. 15.

In 1936, Himmler published essays on combating enemies of the state, on the Gestapo and on protective custody in the journal "Deutsches Recht"; in 1936, he wrote "Die Schutzstaffel als antibolschewistische Kampforganisation" (The Schutzstaffel as an anti-Bolshevik combat organization), which once again made clear the unchanged thrust of the terror, and with his lecture "Wesen und Aufgabe der SS und der Polizei" (The nature and task of the SS and the police) at a Wehrmacht training course in January 1937, where he spoke, among other things, about the future "Inner German theater of war" and how to secure it. The text was published in a confidential military document.³⁴

From mid-1938, the Security Service began to think about the further organization of the surveillance and enforcement apparatus. They were reflected, among other things, in a memorandum from the SD staff chancellery dated February 24, 1939. The aim of the deliberations was to "guarantee internal security" in the event of a war. "In the further consistent implementation of the political development line of the SS, i.e. in the process of merging the police and SS", the "creation of the Reich Security Service (merger of SD - Sipo)" by "sensibly merging the joint Reich central offices" was a "further milestone". The name Reich Security Main Office also appeared in the draft. For this purpose, six offices (I Administration and Law, II Research Office, III Domestic Intelligence Service, IV Foreign Intelligence Service - i.e. the three previous 8 D Offices - V Defense and Political Executive, i.e. the Gestapo and VI Crime Prevention, Criminal Police) were to be merged while retaining the decree of July 1937 on the function of the SD and Gestapo, which had not yet brought about the necessary "tooth-and-nail interlocking". The tasks of the offices responsible for domestic political surveillance had already been defined: Office II was to carry out "large-scale planning to combat the enemy by researching their ideologies, world views, tactical combat methods and strategies", while Office III was to be the "provider of a truly effective intelligence service on all walks of life". The latest date envisaged for the reorganization was 1 October 1935.³⁵

[168] According to a note on Heydrich's remarks from April 4, 1939, Himmler rejected the proposed name Reich Security Service, as it was already used by the Hitler Protection Command. The tasks of the SD offices were confirmed and the close cooperation between the future Offices III and V was emphasized.³⁶ An undated study entitled "Basic Thoughts on the Reorganization", which dealt with the Secret State Police, agreed with the new structure and also referred to the interest of the "military authorities in gaining total control, at least at the top, of the observation of political developments at home and abroad on the basis of the theory of total war". The author also argued in favour of a Reichskartei, but advised that due to the expected start-up difficulties, the consolidation and reorganization should "only be undertaken once the larger tasks envisaged have been solved".³⁷ This undoubtedly referred to terrorist actions in the event of the disengagement from the war.

In the second half of the 1930s, the entire expansion, specialization and interlocking of the terror apparatus was geared towards the outbreak of war. Himmler and Heydrich played a particular role in this, although not, as many bourgeois accounts claim, primarily out of a personal desire for power, but primarily in the interests of German imperialism's policy of aggression. The declared main task of the fascist surveillance and executive organs was to enforce this policy domestically and to secure the entire regime politically, especially against the class opponent. The decisive role in this was still played by the complementary repressive institutions of the police and the Nazi Party.

3. *The first weeks of the war*

In the night hours of August 31, 1939, a telex from the Chief of the Security Police, Heydrich, to the state police offices ordered that from seven o'clock the next day, those in Group A 1 of the A-

³⁴ IMG, Vol. 29, p. 225, Doc. PS-1992-A.

³⁵ ZStA Potsdam, Film 626.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., film 1174.

The people listed in the register were arrested.³⁸ Around 2,000 communists and an unidentifiable number of social democratic functionaries were then arrested and immediately thrown into concentration camps. In addition, on September 1, 1939, the Secret State Police Office decreed that the central task was to "combat and suppress anti-state and state-endangering activities, especially those based on communist-Marxist principles and within the framework of the so-called Popular Front policy, with all means at their disposal".³⁹ According to the "Principles of internal state security during the war" of September 3, 1939, which were most likely drawn up by Heydrich or his staff, all arrested political opponents were to be reported immediately to the Chief of the Security Police, who would decide on their "brutal liquidation". Persons suspected of active Communist and Social Democratic activities, "incitement or disruption" of the Wehrmacht or larger groups of people as well as sabotage, it was stated in a supplementary order dated September 20, 1939, would be "eradicated by the most ruthless action (i.e. by execution)".⁴⁰

In fact, Himmler had a series of executions carried out in September 1939 after Heydrich's presentation. He also ordered that all political prisoners brought to concentration camps after the start of the war should initially be placed in punishment wards. With this in mind, Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller ordered in October 1939 that "the transfer to a concentration camp" should be announced "by means of a notice" in factories where the arrested person had influenced the workforce politically. The "deterrent effect could be increased" by means of "skillful whispering propaganda".⁴¹

The number of threats of punishment increased dramatically in the first days of the war. Obviously prepared long in advance, such drawer provisions made e.g. listening to foreign broadcasts, subversion of military power, contacts with prisoners of war, destruction of raw materials, faulty production and destruction of military equipment, disruptions in important factories and uniting against the war punishable by death. The number of sentences in political trials also rose rapidly, for example for so-called broadcasting crimes from 36 in 1939 to 830 in 1940, and from 3 to 1909 in the same period for prohibited contact with prisoners of war. At the People's Court, the number of defendants rose from 470 to 1091 from 1939 to 1940, and the number of sentences from 281 to 556. In contrast to the later accumulation of death sentences, prison sentences still predominated.⁴² However, [170] they were not to be imposed until after the end of the war.

³⁸ *ibid.*, film 1628 - Heydrich had a similar arrest operation prepared by an instruction dated June 18, 1941, whereby it was expressly stated that initially not those on the existing A-file were to be arrested, but rather KPD functionaries who appeared to be particularly dangerous. The arrests took place - to a lesser extent than on September 1, 1939 - on June 22, 1941. Another instruction dated June 18, 1941 stated: "In the case of refusal to work, enemy propaganda or suspicion of sabotage, all foreign workers are to be severely intervened with arrests and protective custody" (*ibid.*, film 1176).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, film 1629.

⁴⁰ History of the German Labor Movement, vol. 5, p. 525, doc. 60; p. 527, doc. 62.

⁴¹ ZStA Potsdam, Film 1628 - Deterrence was also a function of the so-called labor education camps. They were based on penal camps for workers forced to build the West Wall (e.g. Hinzert camp, established in October 1939) and were intended for those unwilling and unwilling to work, according to directives signed by Himmler in May and December 1941. The first labor education camps included Hunswinkel (January 1940) and Watenstedt (October 1940). Some of their inmates had to work for large companies, e.g. from Hunswinkel for the AG für Hoch- und Tiefbau. In April 1941, the SD reported that the management of large companies had drawn attention to "the urgent need for stricter measures in cases of deliberate and malicious indiscipline". As there was too long a period of time between reporting and punishment, "such a delayed punishment would remove the deterrent effect on the rest of the workforce". For this reason, various companies were themselves "assigned to specially designated educational camps" (*ibid.*, film 4837). Subordinate to the Gestapo offices, the work education camps were similar in type and procedure, including the punishment regulations, to concentration camps, as they were often the last stop before being sent to a concentration camp or were set up directly next to them. Political prisoners were also incarcerated in some labor education camps, such as those of the Berlin Gestapo headquarters in Berlin-Wuhlheide (May 1941) and Großbeeren (autumn 1942).

⁴² Deutschland im zweiten Weltkrieg, edited by a collective of authors under the direction of Wolfgang Schumann, Vol. 1: Vorbereitung, Entfesselung und Verlauf des Krieges bis zum 22. Juni 1941, directed by Gerhart Hass, Berlin 1974, p. 118; Walter Wagner, Der Volksgerichtshof im nationalsozialistischen Staat, Stuttgart 1974, p. 875 f., p. 945.

although the convicts were immediately taken to prisons. Executed death sentences were indicated by blood-red posters on the notice boards. Propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels insisted on publishing new harsh sentences at regular intervals, for example for eavesdropping on foreign broadcasters.

In the midst of the flood of ordinances, Heydrich presented a draft on the so-called Volksmelddienst. According to it, all adult Germans were to be obliged to report anything that could affect the conduct of the war.⁴³ Although no corresponding ordinance was issued, the intention to extend surveillance to the extreme was characteristic of the atmosphere at the beginning of the war. In the same spirit, the NSDAP leadership urged its members to "recognize the beginning of dangerous and unruly movements in good time ... (to) recognize the beginning of dangerous and unruly movements in good time so that they can be rooted out without affecting large sections of the population". Close cooperation with the Gestapo was necessary in order to be able to take action quickly and ruthlessly.⁴⁴

The process of merging political surveillance and repression came to an end as the terror intensified with the start of the war. As early as August 31, 1939, the Chief of the Security Police had ordered the Secret State Police to restrict its activities in the areas of church, reaction, economy, NSDAP and press, but to intensify persecution in the areas of communism/Marxism, opposition, protective custody and defense. The following day, Heydrich issued an interim solution for the reorganization of the Security Main Office. Himmler ordered the central merger into the Reich Security Main Office on September 27, 1939. The main features of the Main Office corresponded to the existing plan, with the exception of the numbering of the offices: Adversary Research (Office II), German Life Areas (Office III), Combating the Adversary (Office IV) and Combating Crime (Office V) stood structurally side by side, followed by the SD Abroad (Office VI).⁴⁵ An undated study on the "Organization and Tasks of the Secret State Police" then spoke of "intertwined task branches of the Security Police and the SD". They had 60 SD sections and 71 state police offices.⁴⁶

With the beginning of the war, the Reich Security Main Office and its subdivisions were the perfect instrument of terror, whose task, as Heydrich emphasized, was "not only executive security, but also ideological and territorial security". This included, as he went on to write, "the total, constant registration of all people in the [171] empire and the associated possibility of a constant overview of the situation of individual people".⁴⁷

In this sense, surveillance and persecution also included members of the armed forces, as stated in the service regulations for the Secret Field Police issued by the Chief of the OKW, Wilhelm Keitel, six weeks before the start of the war. It was assigned the task of combating "all anti-people and anti-state endeavors" in the army and in the area of operations and of conducting "police investigations into matters of high treason and treason against the state, espionage, sabotage, the use of military equipment, subversion and other punishable attacks against the state and the Wehrmacht", in the Reich territory together with the Gestapo.⁴⁸ The secret field police were recruited from

⁴³ ZStA Potsdam, Film 19435; draft of September 18, 1939 and corresponding article in the "NS-Schulungsbrief".

⁴⁴ Quoted from Germany in the Second World War, vol. 1, p. 210.

⁴⁵ ZStA Potsdam, films 2436 and 1174 - When Office I (Administration and Law) was divided into two offices (Personnel, Training and Organization and Budget and Economics) in the autumn of 1940, the former Office II was renamed Office VII (Weltanschauliche Forschung und Auswertung). Although there were later shifts and changes in terminology within the offices, the main structure of the Reich Main Security Office remained the same until the end of the war. The number of SS employees continued to increase over the course of the war. It amounted to almost 14,300 in June 1941, around 15,200 in December of the same year, over 16,600 in December 1942 and more than 18,100 at the end of the following year (ibid., films 14 451, 3347 and 1562).

⁴⁶ Ibid., film 1174.

⁴⁷ Quoted from Hans Buchheim, Die SS - das Herrschaftsinstrument, in: Hans Buchheim/Marti Broszat/Hans-Adolf Jacobson/Helmut Krausnick, Anatomie des SS-Staates, vol. I, Olten/Freiburg i. Br. 1965, p. 116; letter from Heydrich to Daluge dated October 30, 1941.

⁴⁸ ZStA Potsdam, Film 14 354.

The OKW was largely formed from the Security Police and became one of its parts in 1942. In addition, at the beginning of the war, the OKW's Letter Inspection Office and the Gestapo's Telegram Inspection Office took up their duties.

Surveying the terror measures taken in the first weeks of the war and their effects, Heydrich expressed his satisfaction in a speech printed in the "Völkischer Beobachter" on February 17, 1941: they were spoken of with "a mixture of fear and horror" and "brutality, inhumanity bordering on the sadistic and heartlessness". In fact, based on the regime of violence inaugurated in 1933 and its institutions, which had been expanded and cooperated with in the pre-war years, a centralized terror system was in operation at the beginning of the war, which controlled the situation at home in order to ensure concentration on the first acts of war and the subsequent acts of aggression. Obviously, the memory of the revolutionary events of 1918 also resonated, prompting those in power to expand the terror in such a comprehensive manner in a short space of time and to develop its centralized system.

4. After the collapse of the Blitzkrieg strategy

The warning signs of November 1918 became more apparent to the rulers of Nazi Germany from 1942 onwards, but especially with the turning point of the war in 1943. After the failure of the Blitzkrieg strategy in the winter of 1941/42, they sought to maintain control of the situation at home through increased terror in all areas. Himmler explicitly referred to the changed war situation when he wrote to the SS Chief of Staff in June 1942: "The political development of the Reich has been further accelerated by the events of the war." The "necessary political decisions will only be brought to bear with the necessary force if they are absolutely uniform and take into account the respective fluctuations in development in the correct form".⁴⁹

The terror regime continued to pay particular attention to the working class. "The preventive measures taken," the Gestapo announced in December 1941, "in particular the extensive intensification of state police surveillance in the factories with the involvement of the defense representatives of the armaments factories [172] and factory security, guarantee that no surprise can come from these circles and that any actual activity is immediately prevented."⁵⁰ During the Battle of Stalingrad, the Reich Security Main Office instructed the defense commissioners that it was "increasingly urgent" to "protect the factories from disruptions by the enemy forces".⁵¹ On average, almost 3,000 people were arrested every month for political reasons in 1941, almost 5,500 in 1942, around 7,300 in 1943 and around 8,300 in 1944.⁵²

Foreign forced laborers were increasingly counted among the opposing forces. In December 1941, Heydrich proposed the formation of a working group of all departments involved, which was to regularly discuss and decide on problems of forced labor deployment that arose under the direction of the Reich Main Security Office.⁵³ The "Working Group for the Discussion of Security Police Questions Concerning the Deployment of Foreigners", which met in the same month, included representatives from 16 ministries, civilian offices, military departments, NSDAP institutions and repressive organs.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Quoted from Deutschland im zweiten Weltkrieg, edited by a collective of authors under the direction of Wolfgang Schumann, Vol. 2: Vom Überfall auf die Sowjetunion bis zur sowjetischen Gegenoffensive bei Stalingrad (Juni 1941 bis November 1942), directed by Karl Drechsler with the collaboration of Klaus Drobisch and Wolfgang Schumann, Berlin 1975, p. 91.

⁵¹ ZStA Potsdam, Film 5216; Materials for the briefing of the political-police counterintelligence officers of 2.2.1943.

⁵² Calculated from fragmentary data for June to December 1941, May to August 1942, January to September 1943, January to June 1944 (IML/ZPA, St. 3/101, St. 3/103, St. 3/104, St. 3/105, St. 3/107, St. 3/108, St. 3/115, St. 3/117, St. 3/118, St. 3/119, St. 3/100/1; Günther Weisenborn, Der lautlose Aufstand. Bericht über die Widerstandsbewegung des deutschen Volkes 1933-1945, Frankfurt a. M. 1974, p. 175 f.).

⁵³ ZStA Potsdam, Nuremberg Succession Trials Case 11 (Wilhelmstraßenprozeß) No. 373, Bl. 55, Doc. NG-3347; note by the representative of the Foreign Office about the meeting on Dec. 3, 1941.

⁵⁴ One of the working group's main topics was the refusal to work and the escape of foreign forced laborers. On the basis of reports from company terror organizations, constant checks and large-scale searches in which the NSDAP, whose

First and foremost, "the deployment of workers from the old Soviet Russian territory ... posed greater dangers than any other deployment of foreigners", Himmler's instruction to the security police and SD from February 1942 stated; Gestapo officers had to instruct the counter-intelligence officers to increase surveillance at the workplaces and in the accommodation facilities by plant security, foremen, supervisors and camp leaders. Particular attention was to be paid to "the spread of communist propaganda and the danger of acts of sabotage". Any activity detrimental to the regime was to be punished with imprisonment in a concentration camp or "special treatment". At the same time, "any solidarity between German people and workers from the old Soviet territory must be avoided".⁵⁵ Accordingly, German workers were instructed by [173] the factory management to refrain from all relations with Soviet forced laborers under threat of the death penalty and to report any attempt at contact on their part. The company and armaments factory counter-intelligence officers were authorized to search foreigners' accommodation, carry out investigations and conduct raids together with police officers and NSDAP functionaries in accordance with Gestapo guidelines.⁵⁶ The more the number of foreign forced laborers grew and the more the war situation worsened for the fascists, the harsher the terror became and the closer the interplay between the economic and terror apparatus. In October 1943, for example, the Reich Iron Association demanded that the Gestapo and the Reich Trustee of Labor "swiftly prosecute and severely punish" recalcitrant foreigners and "loafers", "if necessary up to concentration camps".⁵⁷

In view of the changed situation, the concentration camps were given "a new and extraordinarily important task", Himmler explained to the head of the newly created SS Economic Administration Main Office Oswald Pohl at the beginning of March 1942, namely to utilize the concentration camp inmates for armaments production. "The detention of prisoners solely for security, educational or preventive reasons is no longer the main focus," Pohl continued. "The emphasis has shifted to the economic side." Himmler confirmed this, but pointed out that the impression must remain, at least among the public, that the concentration camps primarily had an "educational purpose".⁵⁸

In fact, the concentration camps were still used for terrorization and extermination; however, since 1942 they were also places of mass exploitation under slavery-like conditions. Following the experience that the IG Farben industry had gained since 1941 with the use of concentration camp prisoners, large companies in the aircraft industry in particular began to employ concentration camp inmates at the end of 1941/beginning of 1942. They were followed in increasing numbers by other armaments companies, so that the concentration camp system reached its greatest extent in 1944. In March 1944, there were 20 main camps and 165 satellite camps.⁵⁹ By the end of 1944, the number of main camps had decreased due to wartime events, but the number of subcamps had increased to an estimated 500. The number of concentration camp prisoners rose from 98,000 in July 1942 to 123,000 in January 1943, 234,000 in August 1943, over 524,000 in July 1944 and over 714,000 in January 1945.⁶⁰

The average monthly number of foreigners arrested for so-called work stoppages was around 6500 in 1941, around 20,000 in 1942, around 29,000 in 1943 and over 32,000 in 1944 (see note 52). According to a report by Kaltenbrunner from October 1944, around 170,000 foreign forced laborers were arrested during war investigations in the first half of 1944 (ZStA Potsdam, Film 14355).

⁵⁵ IMG, Vol. 31, Nuremberg 1948, p. 501 ff., Doc. PS-018 - In addition, the Foreign Investigation Office controlled the mail traffic of forced laborers. According to the business distribution plan of the Reich Main Security Office of February 1944, this office was subordinate to the Gestapo.

⁵⁶ The constant expansion of the direct punitive power of the employers since 1942, promoted by Himmler, Ley, Sauckel and Seldte, and their sentences imposed on the German Labor Front and the trustees of labor, which went as far as incarceration in concentration camps, can only be mentioned here.

⁵⁷ Quoted from Klaus Drobisch/Dietrich Eichholtz, *Die Zwangsarbeit ausländischer Arbeitskräfte in Deutschland während des zweiten Weltkrieges*, in: *ZfG*, 5/1970, p. 635.

⁵⁸ Quoted from Klaus Drobisch, *Widerstand in Buchenwald*, Berlin 1977, p. 56, p. 61.

⁵⁹ ZStA Potsdam, Film 14 428 - There were also three youth protection camps and almost 50 labor education camps, some of which were set up directly next to large companies.

⁶⁰ Arch. GKBZHP, Proc. Nor. 4, dok. prok., T. 6, k. 40/41, Dok. PS-1469; letter from Pohl to Himmler dated 30.9.1943; T. 3, k. 117, Doc. NO-1990; letter from Burger to Lörner dated August 15, 1944; ZStA Potsdam, Film 14428; unsigned

Judicial terror also increased from 1942 onwards. In August 1942, when Hitler appointed Georg Thierack as Minister of Justice, Gurt Rothenberger as his State Secretary and Roland Freisler as [174] President of the People's Court, he emphasized that the judiciary had to prosecute everything that was detrimental to the war effort with the utmost severity, otherwise "what was in 1918" would return. It must therefore "ruthlessly exterminate the scum".⁶¹ The fascists were primarily concerned with adapting the criminal justice system to the changed situation while maintaining the same objectives and enabling it to act even more brutally, quickly and directly. One important means was the simplification and tightening of legal norms. In March 1942, Rothenberger, then President of the Higher Regional Court in Hamburg, suggested going beyond the "framework of peacetime jurisdiction" in his memorandum "Thoughts on a National Socialist reform of the judiciary".⁶² He relied on a "uniformly oriented, self-contained corps of judges", as he wrote in 1943, which would be "a powerful instrument ... for maintaining order in the national community".⁶³

Simplified and tightened procedures were offered, among other things, by the newly drafted Special War Criminal Law Ordinance from May 1944 and the Ordinance for Securing the Total War Effort from August 1944, which stated, almost word for word, for Wehrmacht members and civilians that anyone who was responsible for "a particularly serious disadvantage or a particularly serious danger to the conduct of the war or the security of the Reich" could be punished with death.⁶⁴

As a result, the number of death sentences rose sharply, for example in the People's Court from 1192 in 1942 to 2097 in 1944.⁶⁵ The number of death sentences in the military justice system also increased; in June 1943 a Central Special Court was established there and in April 1944 the Central Court of the Army, which was also responsible for political offenses.

By intensifying and accelerating the terror, the criminal justice system moved even closer to the police organs and expanded their cooperation. Thierack informed the head of the Nazi party chancellery, Martin Bormann, in October 1942 that the judiciary was indeed passing very harsh sentences, but that it could only contribute to the physical extermination of Slavs and Jews "to a small extent". The police, who took their measures "free of legal offenses", achieved "much better results".⁶⁶ Under the same aspect, Thierack and Himmler had agreed the previous month to have juvenile prisoners sent to concentration camps for "extermination through labor".⁶⁷ Obviously, IG Farbenindustrie AG's demand to deport prison inmates to Auschwitz for their factory played a role in this.

In June 1943, the Reich Main Security Office determined that "the criminal cases [175] that arose were to be dealt with using the coercive means available to the state police, if necessary by applying to the Reich Main Security Office for special treatment". Only those cases were to be forwarded to the judicial authorities "in which a court sentence appears desirable for political reasons and it is ensured by prior contact that the court will impose the death penalty".⁶⁸ This also applied to members of the Wehrmacht sentenced to imprisonment,

List as of January 1 and 15, 1945 - The guards in the concentration camps numbered almost 41,200 men in January 1945 (ibid.). Among them were numerous members of the Luftwaffe.

⁶¹ Quoted from *Deutschland im zweiten Weltkrieg*, vol. 2, p. 404.

⁶² ZStA Potsdam, Film 19 455.

⁶³ Quoted from *Deutschland im zweiten Weltkrieg*, vol. 2, p. 404.

⁶⁴ Otto Hennicke, *Über den Justizterror in der deutschen Wehrmacht am Ende des zweiten Weltkrieges*, in: *Zeitschrift für Militärgeschichte* 6/1965, p. 719; *RGBL*, 1944/I, p. 184.

⁶⁵ Wagner, *People's Court*, p. 945.

⁶⁶ *SS in action. A documentation of the crimes of the SS*, Berlin 1964, p. 417.

⁶⁷ *IMG*, Vol. 26, Nuremberg 1947, p. 201, Doc. PS-654 - The number of inmates in prisons amounted to almost 109,000 in June 1939, over 134,000 in November 1940, around 196,000 in October 1942, over 181,000 in March 1943 and almost 198,000 in September 1944 (*Deutschland im zweiten Weltkrieg*, vol. 2, p. 417; ZStA Potsdam, films 1648 and 1646). The decline and approximate balance resulted from the transfer of prisoners to police and concentration camps.

⁶⁸ Quoted from Albrecht Wagner, *Die Umgestaltung der Gerichtsverfassung und des Verfahrens- und Richterrechts im nationalsozialistischen Staat*, in: *Die deutsche Justiz und der Nationalsozialismus*, Stuttgart 1968, p. 306.

who were sent to concentration camps under the heading "Interim Detention II" following an order issued by Himmler in the summer of 1944.⁶⁹

Although the criminal justice system and the police worked together more closely than before from mid-1942 onwards, despite all the efforts made it was not possible to increase the share of the judiciary to the same extent as that of the police force, which retained its predominance in the fascist terror system. The close cooperation between the police and judicial authorities remained unaffected, both of which, as executive bodies, helped to keep the situation within the country under control by unscrupulously extending their powers and unlimited terror regulations, by means of unrestricted access in their own way and on their own territory.

From January 1942, the Landwacht and, from December 1942, the Stadtwacht were available as new terror organizations. Following an agreement between Bormann and Himmler, they were recruited from members of the SA, SS and other Nazi organizations as well as civilians unfit for military service and reinforced the local police forces during special terror operations such as raids etc. They were constantly on standby to take action against foreign forced labourers, prisoners of war and other "dangerous persons", to ensure peace in labour camps, to take part in round-ups or to thwart feared major prisoner escapes and uprisings.⁷⁰

In a similar way, large companies, in cooperation with the Wehrmacht and the police, set up company squads and alarm units in addition to plant security, for example Friedrich Krupp AG at its main plants in Essen to "combat any unrest among our approximately 18,000 (of which 6,000 were Eastern workers) foreign followers".⁷¹ Elsewhere, these forces were called factory and group guards or security squads and were formed from the factory squads of the German Labor Front with the support of the Reich Security Main Office.⁷²

Cooperation between the Nazi Party and the secret police also became closer, e.g. in accordance with the agreement between the NSDAP and SD leadership of August 1942 to involve party offices more closely in the activities of the security service; through Bormann's order of June 1943 to help the Gestapo identify listeners of foreign radio stations; by the instruction of the head of the Reich Security Main Office, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, in December 1943 that the Gestapo offices were to investigate reports of Nazi functionaries immediately; by Himmler's circular of April [1944] and Bormann's circular of May 1944, according to which NSDAP functionaries were to be placed at the disposal of the Security Police.⁷³

In June 1942, Himmler emphasized the leading role of the Reich Main Security Office: The "necessary adaptation" of the terror regime "to the prevailing situation" could "only be ensured if the coordination of all political actions on the part of the SS is carried out by an office that is immediately and directly aware of every such fluctuation. Among the main SS offices, only the Reich Main Security Office has the possibility of keeping in constant direct contact with every phase of political development through its predominantly political work."⁷⁴ On December 28, 1942, the head of the Reich Chancellery, Hans-Heinrich Lammers, discussed with Himmler the idea of completely separating the police from the Reich Ministry of the Interior and creating a police ministry.⁷⁵ He then had considerations made with the aim of creating a central police ministry into which the Reich Security Main Office and the Public Order Police as well as the

⁶⁹ ZStA Potsdam, Film 1628; communication from Office IV of the Reich Main Security Office dated September 5, 1944 - A similar procedure had already been followed before the beginning of the war; there was a special Wehrmacht department (SAW) in Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

⁷⁰ Ibid., film 4579; BA Koblenz, NS 6/vorl. 338, NS 6/167.

⁷¹ Quoted from Deutschland im zweiten Weltkrieg, vol. 2, p. 413.

⁷² BA Koblenz, R 16/162; minutes of the meeting of the working group for security police questions concerning the deployment of foreigners on March 31, 1943.

⁷³ Marlis G. Steinert, Hitler's War and the Germans. Stimmung und Haltung der deutschen Bevölkerung im Zweiten Weltkrieg, Düsseldorf/Wien 1970, p. 19, p. 349; ZStA Potsdam, Film 3902 - In February 1944, the Gestapo had almost 31,400 full-time employees and the SD almost 6,500 (ibid., Film 1629). Only some of these were members of the SS, whose number in the entire Reich Main Security Office amounted to around 18,300 in June 1944 (ibid., film 14,451).

⁷⁴ ZStA Potsdam, Film 14 354.

⁷⁵ Ibid., film 19 608.

Reichskommissar zur Festigung des deutschen Volkstums. The central authority, the future Reich Security Ministry, was also to take on tasks "which were currently still being dealt with in various parts of the Reich Ministry of the Interior or which were the responsibility of individual specialist ministries". Although this was "not yet acute at the moment", Himmler's personal advisor informed the Reich Security Main Office in March 1943, "the matter could one day suddenly become urgent".⁷⁶

In order to further centralize the terror apparatus and concentrate its powers accordingly, measures and developments were introduced in 1942 which took full effect in 1943/44, especially in the concentration camp system, which took on unprecedented dimensions. It was no coincidence that the centralization and power of the surveillance and police organs reached its peak in the course of the turning point of the Second World War, completed by the Battle of Kursk, when Himmler took over the leadership of the Reich Ministry of the Interior in August 1943. On behalf of the large industrial "Circle of Friends of the Reichsführer SS", banker Kurt von Schröder congratulated him with the remark that "a strong hand is now certainly very necessary for the leadership of this ministry".⁷⁷ And the "Völkischer Beobachter" announced on August 27, 1943 that a "clear front would now be taken against every coward, against the weakling, against dirt and half measures, against every small and large obstacle".

The increased terror was given weighty propagandistic support by the fact that leading Nazis publicly adopted increasingly threatening tones. Even before the end of the Battle of Stalingrad, Thierack, for example, emphasized during a speech in Breslau that the "justice system must now take action, and take it hard. Because we don't want [177] to go the way of 1918."⁷⁸ This reference to the November Revolution was often repeated in speeches, publications and also in court rulings, especially from 1943 onwards. Countering a development like 1918 with all possible force had become one of the most important motives of Nazi terror. However, in view of the experiences of 1918, efforts were again made not to create a united front of opponents and not to allow any additional adversaries to arise. For this reason, the main enemies of the fascist regime were defamed as particularly inferior in character and their actions as criminal. The convicted person had excluded himself from the "community of the people" and "community of destiny" through his actions, it was said more and more frequently in court rulings and propaganda; he was a traitor to the German people, a dishonorable servant of Germany's enemies. In this way, the German anti-fascists were to be "eradicated" as far as possible, but in any case also isolated from the people.

The propaganda campaign was noticeably loud at times after the fall of fascist Italy. In November 1943, Goebbels registered that the publications about executions had had a "very sobering and deterrent effect".⁷⁹ Himmler made a similar statement to the heads of the Reich propaganda offices in January 1944 and believed he could assure them that "this war and the victory of this war will never be endangered in the slightest by any internal revolt, any development threatening state, economic or political life" due to the extensive reprisals. Above all, "the majority of political communist functionaries have been in concentration camps for many years". They had been "dealt with relentlessly and mercilessly". They would continue to "be tough" and, if necessary, "put hundreds against the wall".⁸⁰

5. The last months of the war

In view of the landing of the Western Allies in France and the Red Army's major offensive in Belarus, which marked the beginning of the final phase of the war, and under the impression of the activities of strong, centrally led KPD and resistance organizations, the regime struck what was supposed to be the decisive blow at home. From June 1944 onwards, this blow hit with particular force the

⁷⁶ Ibid., film 2918.

⁷⁷ IMG, vol. 36, p. 534, doc. EC-454.

⁷⁸ Arch. GKBZHP, Proc. Nor. 3, doc. prok., T. 34, k. 164.

⁷⁹ Goebbels' diaries. From the years 1942-1945, edited with other documents by Louis P. Lochner, Zurich 1948, S. 477.

⁸⁰ ZStA Potsdam, Film 4141.

Communists and the anti-fascist forces allied with them, and to a lesser extent oppositional bourgeois circles and supporters of an imperialist policy without Hitler after July 20, 1944.

While the wave of arrests, convictions, executions and slander was underway, Hitler and Himmler decided on August 14, 1944 to have the chairman of the KPD, Ernst Thälmann, murdered, which took place in Buchenwald concentration camp on the night of August 17-18, 1944. Likewise in order to weaken the progressive forces among the German people and rob them of the leaders of a revolutionary uprising feared by the regime and a future political reorganization, further KPD functionaries were subsequently murdered in other concentration camps, including the Reich and state parliament deputies Rudolf Hennig and Augustin Sandtner in Sachsenhausen, [178] Ernst Schneller and Matthias Thesen, in Dora-Mittelbau the candidate of the Central Committee of the KPD Albert Kuntz and other proven communists. During this period, numerous KPD functionaries also fell under the executioner's axe in the places of execution.

On August 14, 1944, Himmler and Hitler also discussed the arrest of further KPD and SPD members of parliament and SPD and trade union officials. This was carried out a week later under the cover name "Gitter" and also extended to bourgeois members of parliament. Some of them were released after a while, while others, mainly members of the workers' movement, were deported to concentration camps. The obvious intention of the "Gitter" action was to deepen fear and terror, to target and decimate opposition forces so that they would not be available after the defeat.

From the end of 1944/beginning of 1945, the mass murder spread to other circles. Gestapo officers, judicial officials, concentration camp guards, NSDAP functionaries and even factory directors competed to kill prisoners in police stations, prisons, concentration camps and their satellite camps or to murder them when they were evacuated. However, it was not simply a case of fascism running amok, lashing out blindly. In a cold calculation, the regime tried to eliminate as many of the progressive forces of both the German people and other nations as possible in the face of its downfall. For example, on January 24, 1945, the inspector of the security police and SD in Düsseldorf instructed the Gestapo offices in Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Cologne and Münster, citing the Wehrmacht Commander-in-Chief West, Gerd von Rundstedt, to "strike immediately and brutally" against German communists and foreign workers. The persons concerned were to be executed without formally applying to the RSHA for special treatment beforehand."⁸¹ In February/March 1945, Gestapo members murdered 1,800 imprisoned Germans and foreigners near Cologne and from February to April 268 citizens from seven countries near Dortmund. According to witness reports, over 810 prisoners were executed in the Sonnenburg prison at the end of January 1945 on the orders of the State Secretary in the Reich Ministry of Justice, Herbert Klemm. In a decree of February 1945, the Minister of Justice expressly ordered that some categories of prisoners be "handed over to the police for disposal" or "rendered harmless by shooting. The traces of the rendering harmless are to be carefully removed."⁸² And the number of prisoners who perished immediately before or during the evacuation of the concentration camps amounted to tens of thousands. In some cases, those prisoners who had gained a deeper insight into fascist crimes and had held positions in the camps were deliberately exterminated.

Until the last days, Wehrmacht tribunals raged against civilians, Volkssturm men and soldiers, passing death sentences in rows according to overlapping instructions and having them carried out immediately by shooting or hanging from trees and poles. As had been the practice in the concentration camps for years, the murdered were often given signs with abusive words.

⁸¹ Ibid., film 1176.

⁸² Quoted from Case 3, The Judgment in the Lawyers' Trial, rendered on December 4, 1947, by Military Court III of the United States of America, edited by P. A. Steiniger and K. Leszczynski, Berlin 1969, p. 232.

The political function of fascist terror in Nazi Germany, as in previous regimes, was to secure the exploitative order by suppressing the class opponent [179]. The difference, however, was not only in the number of victims, but in the preventive approach and the methods of persecution, in the open and unrestrained approach with the primary goal of eliminating revolutionary and oppositional forces as completely and forever as possible. Fascist terror was characterized not only by the close interaction between police and judicial organs, to which propaganda contributed, but also by the use of new means to isolate, defame, degrade, physically and psychologically break and destroy opponents, as well as the incorporation of new elements into the traditional repressive system. The security service and other surveillance organs, secret state police, company terror facilities and institutions of the NSDAP as well as the concentration camps predominated.

Open, bloody terror was a primary means of fascist German imperialism to violently resolve the basic contradiction between the main classes in its favor and to establish its regime largely undisturbed by its internal opponents, to prepare and carry out its policy of conquest and world domination. In the phase of his downfall, he served to destroy as many of those forces as possible that were capable of leading the German people and other peoples into a new, progressive social order.

[181]

Kurt Pätzold: From expulsion to genocide. On the causes, driving forces and conditions of the anti-Jewish policy of fascist German imperialism

In bourgeois historical literature, it has become fashionable to claim that the materialist theory of history fails in the face of the phenomenon of fascism. The general statement is quasi-proven, but another, equally unproven one is added to it: Marxist thinking, in particular, was utterly helpless in the face of the fascist rulers' attempt to completely exterminate the Jewish and Jewish-future population¹ of Europe. "Marxists are not in a position," writes the American historian of religion Erich Goldhagen, "to give satisfactory answers to such questions within the framework of their theory."² The immediate intention pursued with such statements is probably to offer one's own idealistic and apology-interested interpretations of the genocide as the only true one and to label a fundamentally different question as absurd and false from the outset.

Within bourgeois historiography, the approach that declares racism and anti-Semitism to be the starting and end point of all research into fascism is becoming increasingly prevalent. The entire fascist policy and the Second World War are to be understood solely from the supposedly central and highest objective of Hitler's fascism: to destroy the "Jews"; all decisions and measures of the regime were subordinate to this. Racism and anti-Semitism are presented as the very essence and main characteristic of German fascism.

Andreas Hillgruber, for example, believes that "Hitler's (!) war aims" had a "racial ideological component", which "decisively shaped the course and character of the war" and "found expression in the systematic extermination of European Jewry". Hillgruber considers this version, which steers away from the complex causes and goals of the Second World War that are ultimately rooted in the social system of imperialism, to be "saturated with sources" and believes that "Western historians" have an argument that "unhinges Marxism".³

[182] Martin Broszat recently put forward the same thesis in an only slightly weakened form. The war was "*wanted*" precisely because it created new "possibilities for violent action" against the Jewish people. The intention of "exterminating the Jews" was "itself a part of the motivation for war". In contrast, Broszat only mentions imperial purposes of aggression in passing and does not describe them in detail.⁴ He also wants to leave it at the fact that racism and especially anti-Semitism were the sole or dominant driving force behind all the regime's major steps and the main cause of the war. Historians of the FRG evidently believe that they can divert attention from the connections between capitalism and fascism, the bourgeoisie and the NSDAP by declaring the racial mania and hatred of Jews of the fascist leadership clique to be the intellectual basis of any study of the history of German fascism.

Hitler, Rosenberg, Göring, Goebbels, Streicher, Himmler, Hans Frank, Reinhard Heydrich and many other fascist leaders thought of Jewish people in general and Germans of Jewish origin in particular not only disparagingly and contemptuously, but also sadistically and murderously. That is undisputed. In their speeches, articles and books long before 1933, they repeatedly referred to the "Jews" as "parasites" and "parasites". This notion, which was not invented by the Nazis but disseminated on a massive scale and reinforced by countless distortions of people's history

¹ On the terminology Kurt Pätzold, *Fascism, Racial Delusion, Persecution of the Jews. A Study of the Political Strategy and Tactics of Fascist German Imperialism (1933-1935)* Berlin 1975, p. 84 ff.

² Erich Goldhagen, *Weltanschauung und Endlösung*, in: VfZ, 4/1976, p. 394.

³ See Andreas Hillgruber's review of *Deutschland im zweiten Weltkrieg*, edited by a collective of authors under the direction of Wolfgang Schumann, vol. 1: *Vorbereitung, Entfesselung und Verlauf des Krieges bis zum 22. Juni 1941*, directed by Gerhart Hass, Berlin 1974; vol. 2: *Vom Überfall auf die Sowjetunion bis zur sowjetischen Gegenoffensive bei Stalingrad (Juni 1941 bis November 1942)*, edited by Karl Drechsler with the collaboration of Klaus Drobisch and Wolfgang Schumann, Berlin 1975, in: *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 223, H. 2, p. 366.

⁴ Martin Broszat, *Hitler and the Genesis of the "Final Solution"*. On the occasion of David Irving's theses, in: VfZ, 4/1977, p. 770 f.

The defamation made "credible" prepared the ideological ground for the long-term persecution of Jewish Germans, which was not inhibited by any hint of humane thought or human feeling.

The NSDAP party program of 1920, despite its vagueness in other domestic and especially economic policy passages, already expressed the clear intention of depriving German citizens of Jewish origin of their livelihoods in the fascist state and driving them across the borders. The steps, methods and even pretexts for the persecution of the Jews could already be read from the program, albeit incompletely. For example, it emerged from his text that the fascists in power among the Jews first wanted to persecute the intellectuals and cultural workers and deprive them of work opportunities. This detail alone sheds light on the political functionality of the National Socialist hostility towards Jews, as the core of this demand was not about the fact that members of the Jewish intelligentsia thought and wrote "un-German", but about the fact that they, as democrats, republicans, liberals, and also as socialists and communists, worked against any, but especially against the fascist reaction in speech and writing, with the means of science and art.

Two things were thus already present before 1933: the murderous, racially motivated anti-Jewish ideology of National Socialist character and a political program that, while not containing all conceivable derivations, nevertheless made it clear that the Jewish Germans in the "Third Reich" were to be exposed to the arbitrariness of those in power without rights or protection.

However, the hatred of Jews by fascist ideologues and politicians could never have had its horrific historical consequences if they had not been given power in 1933. Here we must refer to a fact that has not yet been analyzed. Neither the extremely anti-Jewish ideology nor the comparatively limited, but even in this limitation criminal, party platform of the NSDAP prevented the most chauvinistic and imperialist circles of German finance capital from promoting the Nazi party and ultimately favoring its leaders as the force that was to establish the open terrorist dictatorship. How can this be explained, especially since there was not the slightest sign that the Hitler fascists intended to use racism, anti-Semitism and hostility towards Jews merely - which would have been abhorrent and repulsive enough - as a temporary means of winning over a predominantly petty-bourgeois mass following? How can we understand the information provided by all relevant sources that Hitler, during the many meetings he had with members of the capitalist class before 1933, was forced to repeatedly dispel the concerns of his audience about social-demagogic propaganda and especially about the anti-capitalist demagoguery of the NSDAP, but never felt compelled to tone down even the harshest anti-Semitic threats internally?

The observation that anti-Semitism was widespread and deeply rooted in the German bourgeoisie is obviously not sufficient to explain this. Only when it is considered that the ruling class in Germany had war, November Revolution and revolutionary post-war crisis behind it, years in which it coldly walked over millions of dead and was responsible not only for the mass murder of the war dead, but also for the massacres of Spartacists, Communists and other revolutionary fighters, the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, Leo Jogiches, Kurt Eisner, Eugen Leviné, Walther Rathenau and Matthias Erzberger, Finally, the terror of the femicides - only when the full extent of the brutalization of the politics of the bourgeoisie, especially since the entry into the imperialist stage and since the First World War, is taken into account, can it be understood why Kirdorf, Thyssen, Flick, Schacht, the IG Farben bosses and many others of their ilk felt attracted to a party that issued daily death threats against German Marxists and against Germans of Jewish descent. In order to divert attention from these connections, it was often said after 1945 that what followed the handover of power could not have been foreseen. However, not a single piece of cogent evidence has been produced to support the expectation before 1933 that the murderous ideology would not be followed by an adequate criminal practice.

The existence of an ideology that justified and prepared the mass murder of "racial enemies" does not, of course, say anything about the existence of a general, unalterable murder plan of the Hitler-fascist leaders. What was already written about the regime as a whole in the indictment of the International Military Tribunal in 1945 applies to fascist anti-Semitism and the persecution of the Jews: "The aims and purposes of the Nazi conspirators were not fixed once and for all, but developed and expanded in the same measure as their power expanded and as they were able to threaten more effectively with violence and aggressive war."⁵

In contrast to this view, which places the goals, conditions and policies of German fascism in power in a dialectical relationship, the opinion that "the extermination of the Jews was the inevitable consequence of the racial policy conceived by the Nazis from the time they came to power" has also become widespread among bourgeois historians of those states whose competent representatives played a decisive role in the drafting of the Nuremberg indictment in 1945. Rita Thalmann, a French Germanist and historian, who makes this observation, remarks on the function of this unfounded hypothesis that it provided "a convenient alibi" for the pre-war politicians.

"of the great Western nations", "whose weak, if not completely absent reactions" to fascist policies created a condition for "the violence ... could escalate to the extermination of millions of Jews, Slavs or Gypsies".⁶

Martin Broszat also polemicizes against seeing "the extermination of the Jews as a kind of meta-historical event" and understanding it solely "as the consistent fulfilment of a program", "long pre-formed in the original thought processes, methodically and 'logically' put into action step by step".⁷ However, he sees the development and radicalization of the fascist persecution of the Jews merely as a consequence of changes in Hitler's plans and decisions. In this way, however, the history of the persecution of the Jews is not placed in the totality of the historical process, but assigned to one of its factors. And indeed, Broszat embeds the realization that the anti-Semitic policy of the fascists developed to its final stage, the genocide, firmly in the extremely personalistic interpretation of fascism that he advocates, which ultimately answers all questions about the causes and driving forces of the regime stereotypically with the formula "Hitler" and in this way provides German monopoly capital with the most comprehensive alibi.⁸

From its establishment until the beginning of the war, the strategic goal of the persecution of Jews in the fascist state was to drive Jewish Germans out of the country. The political, economic and legal government measures aimed at this strategic goal began in 1933, when predominantly Jewish members of the German intelligentsia were forced to leave their homeland. Before and after the pogrom of November 9/10, 1938, the policy of expulsion culminated in the complete deprivation of profit opportunities for the Jewish bourgeoisie and the already dwindling earning potential of the petty bourgeoisie.

Economic and social pressure, political threats and acts of terrorism were now constantly intensified and took on a new quality. Together with the deliberately created fear of increasing pogroms, they were intended to cause Germans of Jewish origin to turn their backs on their homeland, even if they had to face the most uncertain future. The declared intention of the fascists was now to make the German Reich "Judenrein" (clean of Jews). In a letter from the Foreign Office dated January 25, 1939, addressed to all diplomatic and professional consular missions abroad, it stated bluntly: "The ultimate goal of German Jewish policy is the emigration of all Jews living in the territory of the Reich." The "fateful year 1938" had "brought the Jewish question close to its solution".⁹

⁵ IMG, vol. 1, Nuremberg 1947, p. 32.

⁶ Rita Thalmann Das Protokoll der Wannseekonferenz: Vom Antisemitismus Zur "Endlösung der Judenfrage", in: Wie war es möglich? The Reality of National Socialism Nine Studies, edited by Alfred Grosser, Munich 1977, p. 149.

⁷ Broszat, p. 770, p. 746.

⁸ Ibid., esp. p. 770.

⁹ Arch. GKBZHP NTN 332; Circular letter from the Federal Foreign Office to all diplomatic and professional consular missions abroad dated January 25, 1939, regarding "The Jewish question as a factor in foreign policy in 1938".

[185] In 1938/39, the fascist rulers thus saw the "final solution to the Jewish question" in the expulsion of all Germans of Jewish origin without exception - a term that had already been used by the state bureaucracy since 1933 and was initially intended to emphasize the premature nature of the regime's first anti-Jewish measures.¹⁰

In 1935/36, the Security Service (SD) of the Reichsführer SS developed into the state-political body that planned, directed and organized the strategy of expulsion. It was headed by Reinhard Heydrich. He headed the Security Main Office, which was created in 1935, as well as the expanded institution, the Security Police Main Office, which was established in June 1936. Heydrich's lines of communication to the most powerful politicians in the fascist ruling apparatus ran directly to his immediate superior, the Reichsführer SS and (since 1936) de facto police minister Heinrich Himmler, to Hermann Göring, who on the eve of the war was the undisputed second man in the state and, as the only field marshal in the Reich, had decision-making powers and influence far beyond his actual and already enormous economic, political and military sphere of competence, and finally to Hitler himself.

While Heydrich's staff initially concentrated on studying the "Jewish question", drafting anti-Semitic pamphlets for use in the SD and SS and submitting proposals for the persecution and expulsion of Germans of Jewish origin to other institutions of the fascist ruling apparatus, from 1937, they set themselves the goal of having a decisive influence on all "decisions on the further solution of the Jewish question" and, above all through cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Foreign Office, "to gain direct influence on the practical implementation of emigration". Internally, the intention was openly expressed to develop the Main Office of the Security Police into the central and all-powerful Reich office for the persecution of Jews: "The ultimate goal ... is the centralization of the entire processing of the Jewish question in Germany at the SD and Gestapo."¹¹

Heydrich and his staff quickly came closer to this goal. They established stable relationships with the most important ministries, whose decisions and activities had an impact on the manner and speed of the expulsion. Through their particularly close cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, the Foreign Office, the Reich Ministry of Economics and the Reich War Ministry and the Wehrmacht leadership, the SD employees became familiar with the various aspects that played a role in the expulsion policy. They found their way through the complications that could arise for foreign policy from ill-considered steps and gained an insight into the complex economic policy considerations that still had to be taken into account in the persecution of Jews in the interests of continuing the rearmament.

During this practical activity, the SD leadership came to the conclusion that energetic expulsion, which nevertheless required time, was the only feasible way to eliminate the Jewish Germans. Consequently, Heydrich's office tried to direct the entire anti-Jewish agitation in such a way that it helped to revive and maintain the flow across the borders. This was achieved through connections to the numerous pseudo-scientific institutes that dealt with the "solution of the Jewish question", including the "Jewish Department" of the "Reich Institute for the History of the New

[186] Germany". Employees of the Main Office spoke to visitors from SS, SD, SA and BDM schools, to students of the War Academy and to officers of the Naval High Command; their audience was given the opportunity to visit the Berlin SD headquarters and learn on the spot how the apparatus for the expulsion of Jews worked.

As Heydrich put it in retrospect, the SD leaders consciously accepted the disadvantages arising from their practice "in view of the lack of other possible solutions".¹² Through this

¹⁰ Pätzold, p. 138 f.

¹¹ BA Koblenz, R 58/991, p. 89; letter from 11/112 to 11/1 dated 7.12.1937.

¹² The question of the long-term foreign policy consequences of the expulsion of the Jews was seen by the SD staff, but was virtually suppressed so as not to jeopardize the concept. At the request of the SS Race and Settlement Main Office on July 8, 1937, the specialists in the persecution of Jews in the SD also had to comment on the question of what would become of Palestine as a result of the increased immigration of Jewish people. In the draft for an SS

In practice, a process was promoted that the fascists themselves called "Aufjudung" (analogous to the goal of fascist racial policy, which was to "unify" the German people). They saw that the intellectual influence of Zionism was growing and that the practical role of Zionist organizations, which had been virtually insignificant in Germany until 1933, was increasing. However, they considered these undesirable effects of the persecution of the Jews to be unalterable and even took advantage of them by using the Zionist leaders as helpers in the realization of the "SD line".

Nonetheless, at the beginning of 1938, there were still doubts among the employees of the Main Office of the Security Police who were concerned with solving the "Jewish question" as to how far the previous practice of expelling Jewish Germans abroad would go. There was dissatisfaction with the results of the persecution of the Jews achieved between 1933 and 1937. The idea emerged of seeking a general foreign policy solution instead of the successive expulsion of individuals and families, which would enable mass deportation to other countries. The so-called Madagascar project was already mentioned in Heydrich's office in this context. However, the vague ideas about a different method of expulsion, which could lead more quickly to the final goal, were soon considered outdated. If the tendency to leave the German Reich remained the same among the persecuted, the Nazi specialists calculated, then "in at least 10 years" there would only be 60000 mostly old Jewish people left within Germany's borders.¹³

However, a swelling of the refugee flow was expected from a radicalization and standardization of all anti-Jewish measures. The most comprehensive opportunity for this arose when the fascist German imperialists liquidated the first sovereign European state in March 1938.

The conquered Austria not only offered the opportunity to apply the previous practices and additional plans for the expulsion of Jews on a large scale, but also posed a challenge to the occupiers to develop them further and make them more effective. In addition, with the "Anschluss" of Austria, the number of Jewish inhabitants of Germany increased in one fell swoop and all the results of the expulsion of Jews were quantitatively nullified. In

"Greater Germany" now had more Jewish people than in 1933 in the "Old Reich".

However, it would be wrong to explain the actions of the fascist invaders towards the Austrian Jews primarily by the intention, which of course existed, to quickly make up for this quantitative setback. Rather, this approach was fundamentally determined by the fact that in 1938 the long-term foreign policy and expansionist goals and the war as the instrument for achieving them increasingly took center stage in fascist policy. For anti-Semitism and the persecution of the Jews, this also meant that their strategic functions gained the upper hand. This explained why the anti-Jewish persecution on Austrian territory did not begin at the point where it had started in Germany in 1933. The introductory steps were not even an abbreviated recapitulation of the anti-Jewish policy that had brought so much torment to the Jewish Germans in the five years since the transfer of power. They were aimed directly at the goal of expulsion, bypassing the first steps to a certain extent.

The Security Service, Gestapo and other organs of the fascist repressive apparatus were carefully prepared for the invasion of Austria. A special commando of the SD was immediately set up in Vienna under the leadership of Adolf Eichmann. It immediately set about exploiting the panic that had arisen among the Jewish Austrians and intensifying it through terror, including the deportation of leading Jewish personalities to concentration camps, in order to set in motion and maintain a broad stream of refugees from all social classes and strata, but above all from the less well-off and poor Jews. Austrian Jews were mercilessly displaced from the newly created Austrian districts to Vienna. There they vegetated in

The answer to this was: "We cannot remain indifferent to the development of this Jewish community." One day its representatives would sit on the League of Nations. The quoted passage was deleted after deliberations at the SD headquarters (BA Koblenz, R 58/989, El. 9 ff., DI. 29).

¹³ BA Koblenz, R 58/979, unpag. ; letter from II/112 to II/1123, undated. (ca. March 1938).

miserable quarters under ghetto-like conditions. An emergency appeal addressed to Hitler by the Association of Jewish War Victims, Invalids, Widows and Orphans in Vienna before the start of the war stated that the Jewish members of the Imperial and Royal Army, who had once fought alongside the armies of Imperial Germany, were "crowded together in cramped rooms in which it is unthinkable for the sick to live".¹⁴

It was in occupied Austria that the gruesome consequences of the fascist thesis that "Jewish life" was supposedly "unworthy life" first became apparent. However, it initially emerged as a kind of side effect of the expulsion policy. Thousands of Jewish people still reached the borders. The persecuted still lived in Austria's former capital. For the first time, however, the organizers of the persecution of the Jews began to force their victims into objective conditions that not everyone was able to cope with. Physical liquidation was not yet the goal, but it did not bother the fascists, as the death of some Jewish people helped to speed up the expulsion of many.

The details of the practice of the Eichmann commando are well known and were summarized in the Eichmann trial. Two things are important for the problem to be examined here: Firstly, the Berlin SD headquarters regarded Austria as the training ground for a radicalized anti-Jewish policy, which was soon to be applied in the "Altreich" as well. Secondly, the successes achieved by Eichmann and his collaborators together with the Gestapo were regarded as irrefutable proof that the "SD-like" [188] treatment of the "Jewish question" was the only method that would lead to a "final solution". Of course, the specialists in Jewish expulsion in the SD could only arrive at this view because in 1938 they did not yet have to consider that a European war could decisively impair the effectiveness of their method. In fact, the decision as to when the great war, which meant a military clash with England and France, but above all with the Soviet Union, should be risked had not yet been made even in the closest circle of the fascist rulers. Only in this way was it possible for the opinion to form in the leading and organizing center of the expulsion of the Jews that the procedural path for the "Final Solution" had been found.

From spring 1938 onwards, the expulsion of Jews in Vienna was handled in a way that represented a new level of persecution. However, its essence is not grasped if one focuses only on the bureaucratic center of activity of the Eichmann commando in the Palais Rothschild, which, according to many testimonies of survivors, Jewish people could enter as applicants rich or at least well-off, but which they left pauperized when they were finally handed the papers for legal escape. The fact that the expulsion headquarters functioned and could even give the appearance of a regulated operation, approved and supported by the "Jews" themselves, was mainly the result of the brutal persecution to which the Jewish people were subjected on a daily basis by the Gestapo, Nazi organizations and all the institutions of the fascist state. This alone should prohibit the creation of legends about the activities of the SD in Vienna.

Nevertheless, bourgeois historical accounts gloss over the crimes against Jewish people that took place in Vienna in 1938 and present them as a "mild practice" of anti-Semitism. It is pointed out that those who had been expelled could not have been deported and murdered. For a period of their activities, the SD staff are retrospectively credited with the objective merit of having at least saved their victims from extermination - a merit that Eichmann also claimed for himself in the Jerusalem trial. By offsetting the survival of a minority against the murder of the majority, expulsion and extermination appear as two completely opposing practices and outside of their close historical context.

The general, continuing result of the practice in Vienna, however, was objectively an approximation to the practice of extermination, since the expulsion and the efforts to increase the number of those fleeing were accompanied by the radicalization of all anti-Jewish measures, in particular by growing economic pressure, which increased to the point of de facto expropriation, which

¹⁴ Ibid., R 43 II/599 b, p. 142 f.; letter from the Association of Jewish War Victims, Invalids and Orphans in Vienna to Hitler dated July 7, 1939.

This made those affected economically worthless for the regime and pushed them down the social ladder from one level to the next, until finally, after the last of their own resources had been used up, they could only survive on handouts.

The criminal fascist thesis of "unworthy" Jewish life was in a sense realized in the fascist state in the unworthiness of Jewish people rendered unemployable and functionless - an unworthiness, mind you, that was measured according to the exploitation criteria of suitability for war preparations and war. The stream of refugees and the organized misery, the radical destruction of all economic, social and other ties between the Jewish Germans and Austrians and the majority of their people and their lives, were two sides of the same coin, the "SD-like" treatment and solution of the "Jewish question". Those who stayed behind could count on when they would inevitably sink to the level of paupers. The question of how these people, deprived of all financial means and largely drained of their physical and mental strength, would be deported across the border occupied the SD specialists early on.¹⁵

The policy of expulsion, or it would be more correct to say forced expulsion, tested in occupied Austria and soon transferred to the "Old Reich", therefore had a double result. It led to the flight of the smaller part of the Germans and Austrians (after the occupation of Czechoslovakia also the Czechs of Jewish origin living in the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia"), and it forced the larger part that remained in the fascist sphere of power into a state of willingness to flee until the beginning of the war. When this partial goal of the fascist leadership had been achieved and the willingness to leave the country had reached its peak as a result of the pogroms of November 9/10, 1938, and the hope of experiencing better times in Germany itself had reached its low point, the war and the events of the war quickly dried up the flow of refugees. Only those who ignore this twofold result can write down a sentence such as that "Heydrich's emigration policy ... in retrospect ... turned out to be a kind of large-scale rescue operation for hundreds of thousands of Jews".¹⁶ When speaking of the objective effects of this policy, it must be emphasized above all that it brought about a situation that pushed the fascist "solution of the Jewish question" into ever more radical directions.

A look at the dual result of the expulsion policy also makes it clear that the distinction within the leading fascist politicians between a "party of extremists" of anti-Semitism and the persecution of the Jews, which is said to have been formed primarily by Hitler, Streicher and Goebbels, and their opponents with Heydrich as the personal center and the SD as the institutional center, is constructed and untenable.¹⁷ Ideologically and programmatically, differences that justify such a differentiation cannot be proven anyway. In practice, the fascist leaders worked in unison in 1938/39 in the forced repression of the Jewish people, despite differing views on the method and speed of the procedure. In practice, the unrestrained anti-Jewish agitation of Streicher and the "Stürmer" editorial staff, which already included incitement to murder, formed a kind of motor of the expulsion policy. Heydrich's and the SD's criminal successes can thus rightly be called the successes of Streicher and Goebbels.

The practice of forced expulsion refutes all claims that the fascist rulers already had a general murder plan before the war, to which all others, especially the war plans of German imperialism, were subordinate. To declare the persecution of the Jews to be the cause of the war is to ignore the historical context.

¹⁵ A solution seemed to have been found by robbing the rich and wealthy people in Austria. See Eichmann's letter to II/112 of September 14, 1938, in which the intention is expressed to force one rich "Jew" to take nine poorer ones with him (ibid., R 58/1353, unpag.). A dispute broke out between the SD, Gestapo and other fascist agencies of the state and the party over the actual use of the stolen money, see ibid.; letter from Eichmann to Herbert Hagen dated May 10 and June 16, 1939.

¹⁶ Günther Deschner, Reinhard Heydrich. Governor of total power. Biography, Esslingen 1977, p. 174.

¹⁷ For example, ibid. p. 166.

upside down. The next strategic goal at the heart of fascist policy was to put the German Reich in a state of material and spiritual readiness for war at the earliest possible date. Anti-Semitism and the persecution of the Jews served this strategy. However, the main function of the anti-Jewish ideology and practice of the pre-war years was to aggressively form the "national socialist people's community" and successively prepare it for its role as a wartime community. The Germans were to learn to hate, despise, subjugate, torture, kill and murder for their intended purpose of being instruments of imperialist conquest policy. To behave criminally towards members of other peoples and races should appear to them as the natural prerogative of their "race". Hostility towards and persecution of the Jews drilled into many Germans that inhuman way of thinking and feeling which, when it broke out from 1939 onwards, left millions of people around the world paralyzed with horror.

However, the Germans' intellectual and moral preparation for war was not the end of anti-Semitism and the persecution of Jews. They served the regime before and during the war to present itself as revolutionary. The "Aryanizations", the disappearance of the Jewish banks and industrial companies, the Jewish department stores, stores and stores were intended to conceal the fact that this alleged "National Socialist revolution" had in reality not even shaken the property relations of capitalist society. In 1938, anti-Semitism had not exhausted itself in its application as a substitute for revolution. Even though the "Jewish plutocrats" were finally liquidated in the fascist state, they continued to exist in London, Paris and elsewhere and allegedly led the fight against the "new Germany" from there. The anti-Jewish incitement against "the Jew" as the alleged internal enemy merged seamlessly into the legend of "world enemy Judaism". The appeals that explained to the German people at the beginning of September 1939 why they now had to wage war testify to how the fascist leadership pushed the masses from one "blood-based" realization to the next, i.e. from one anti-Semitic lie to the next, even more monstrous one.¹⁸

In its application to the war, towards which the regime had been striving from the day of its establishment, fascist anti-Semitism could practically never utilize itself as long as there were still "Jews" living anywhere on the globe, real or declared. According to the pragmatic structure of fascist anti-Semitism, tailored to the needs of German imperialism, it was impossible for the "Jews" to out Hitler and Goebbels, Himmler and Heydrich, before this imperialism reached its ultimate goal, the domination of the world. While the Jewish people of Berlin, Vienna and Prague, Warsaw, Amsterdam, Brussels and Paris were brutally killed, the "enemy of the world" in its allegedly twofold form continued to operate in Moscow and New York as "Jewish Bolshevism" and "Jewish plutocracy".

The efforts to expel the Jewish people from the fascist sphere of power cannot be fitted into a historical picture that draws a preconceived fascist step-by-step plan for the persecution of the Jews up to mass murder. Deportation and extermination were not, as Karl Dietrich Bracher writes, "merely a question [191] of time and opportunity"¹⁹. In 1939, they were not yet a policy decided by the fascist leadership for any future situation. Therefore, until the beginning of the war, the expulsion of the Jewish population represented a real alternative to the extermination strategy that was planned and implemented at a later stage. However, this temporary alternative could only save hundreds of thousands of lives on the condition that the fascist rulers were forced to make peace through deterrence. This did not happen. When the fascists switched to forced expulsion, the Munich policy reached its climax, the policy that gave the fascists the strongest encouragement to take ever more adventurous warlike steps.

¹⁸ See the fascist appeals to the people and the membership of the NSDAP after the declarations of war by France and England, *Völkischer Beobachter*, September 4, 1939.

¹⁹ Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur. The emergence, structure and consequences of National Socialism*, Cologne 1969, p. 397.

An account of the fascist persecution of the Jews that breaks away from the scientifically untenable schema "In the beginning was the murder plan, in the end the mass murder" and deals with its history itself will have to follow the step from the strategy of expulsion to the strategy of genocide when and where it took place: during the war and on the territory of Poland. However, such an investigation only has a chance of success if it understands the imperialist war of the Hitler-fascists as a social totality and does not see it merely as a sequence of events. The question of the character of the war and the goals that German imperialism sought to achieve through it cannot be ignored.

The Second World War began as a European war and military conflict between imperial powers. Its very name places it in relation to the war of 1914 to 1918. Both wars arose from the efforts of imperialist groups of powers to resolve the contradictions between them, which had come to a head, by means of military force, expansion and occupation. In both cases, it was German imperialism - interested in a redistribution of territories, economic resources and spheres of influence above all others - that pushed for war and triggered it.

As imperialistic as the war aims and appropriate to them was the ideology which the ruling circles in Germany had spread to prepare the masses mentally and psychologically for the policy of military conquest. This was an extreme culmination of intellectual aggression against other peoples and nations, without measure or limit. The intention of the German imperialists to achieve supremacy on the globe in a chain of successive wars and to maintain it permanently had its ideological equivalent in a world view according to which the Germans were a people chosen by Providence, called to rule over other "Jewified" and "negroized" nations. The Germans were supposed to believe that they were following a secret world plan recognized by their fascist leaders when they attacked other peoples in order to subjugate them - in reality, however, to the real economic and political interests of German finance capital.

The role that anti-Semitism in particular played in the fascist war ideology and in answering the questions of why the war came about and who was interested in it, as already described here, gave rise to fears from the outset of bad things for the Jewish people who had not yet decided to flee by September 1, 1939, or whose plans had been thwarted by the outbreak of war.

The beginning of the war marked an objective change in the situation. Regardless of the initial lack of harsher anti-Jewish measures and persecution, this change justifies assessing the beginning of the war as the starting point of a new stage in the anti-Semitic racism of the fascists. This was also the view of SS officer Dieter Wisliceny when he wrote in Bratislava prison in the fall of 1946, shortly before his execution: "The outbreak of war, the rapid occupation of Poland and Hitler's decision to annex the Polish territories created a completely new situation and brought new consequences."²⁰

What characterized the new situation in detail?

Firstly, the beginning of the war made the organizational, economic, financial and technical measures to expel the "Jews" from the Reich's territory more difficult. The work of the "Emigration Centers", which had begun with such high hopes, came up against ever greater obstacles.

Secondly, the general solutions that were occasionally considered, which would have amounted to selling the Jewish people to foreign countries for as much foreign currency as possible - foreign currency that would in turn be used to prepare for war - were rendered obsolete by events. Now the war was to feed the war, the conquest of one country was to create the material resources for the attack on the next.

²⁰ ZStA Potsdam, film collection no. 5436, doc. 773.

Thirdly, with every kilometer that the fascist military machine advanced eastwards, the number of Jewish people in the German sphere of influence increased. Due to the relatively high proportion of the Jewish population in Poland, it increased much more rapidly than the number of Germans, Austrians and Czechs of Jewish origin decreased as emigration dried up.

Fourthly, it was clear from the outset that organizing the emigration of these people living on Polish territory would be an impossible task. Compared to the conditions in the German Reich and the occupied territories of Austria and Czechoslovakia, there were a disproportionately large number of very poor Jews among them. The emigration of the Jewish poor, however, posed particular difficulties for the fascists, as Austrian experience had shown.

Fifthly, it became apparent already in the first weeks of the war that the fascist conquerors immediately treated the Jewish people who fell into their hands in Poland during a campaign and who were not only regarded as "Jews" but also as "Jews in an enemy nation" in a more brutal and - in the truest sense of the word - immediately murderous manner. In Poland, the fascist persecution of Jews began in September 1939 on a different level than in the peacefully occupied territories of the former Austrian and Czechoslovakian states. Round-ups, ghettoization, the first deportations and massacres were the hallmarks from the very beginning. In the long run, this practice on the territory of Poland could not remain without repercussions on the mistreatment of Jewish people in all other parts of the fascist sphere of influence.

Sixthly, the war allowed the imperialist rulers' need for racist and anti-Semitic ideology to continue to grow, especially as the regime's internal compulsion to repeatedly impress upon its own people why it [193] had to wage war continued. This also applied to the interest in providing the German occupying soldiers in Poland with a justification video for the acts of violence and atrocities that were committed literally day after day, which contradicted all international legal norms.

Sooner or later, only disaster could result from this situation, which is outlined here in the form of a thesis, for all Jewish people in the fascist area of rule: it could only be averted if the course of the war changed fundamentally and quickly to the disadvantage of the German imperialists. However, this was out of the question in the fall of 1939 after the campaign against Poland, which had been so successful for them, due to the inaction of the imperialist Western powers.

Even during the last military battles against the remnants of the Polish army, the fascist specialists were still dealing with the changed circumstances for the "solution of the Jewish question". On September 21, 1939, Heydrich, who was appointed head of the newly created Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) a few days later, summoned the heads of the so-called Einsatzgruppen of the SS, who sought to stifle even the slightest thought of resistance in Poland through the most deterrent blood terror, to a meeting in Berlin on the "Jewish question in the occupied territory". Its outcome was summarized on the same day in a decree²¹. It contained the general plan for the persecution of Jews in Poland even before the organization of the occupation regime as a whole had been decided.

Heydrich's decree distinguished between a final goal, the achievement of which required a longer period of time, and "the stages of the fulfillment of this final goal", which were to be completed in the short term. However, it was not clear what was meant by the terms "final objective" or - this term was used synonymously - "planned overall measures" in the context of this first anti-Jewish general plan for the conquered Polish territories. In any case, it was expressly stated that this "final objective" was to be kept strictly secret. However, the steps to be taken already pointed in a clear direction. "As a first preliminary measure" (this is probably a spelling mistake and should be translated as "advance measure" in accordance with the Fascist usage), it was stated that "the concentration of Jews from the countryside to the larger cities" was to be undertaken. As it was further stipulated that

²¹ Ibid., doc. 775.

was to be railroad junctions in all cases, or at least places with railroad stations, there was no doubt that these were temporary concentration areas from which the Jewish people were to be deported to more distant areas in due course.

This first decision by the fascist rulers in September 1939 was already based on the consideration - although, as soon became apparent, the consequences for the fascist interests of conquest and war were not even remotely well thought out - that they could now dispose of a territory to which Poles and "Jews" could be expelled without having to negotiate with any foreign government or observe immigration quotas and conditions. Other considerations, especially those relating to undesirable propaganda effects abroad, now seemed to be completely superfluous. Under these circumstances, the policy of expulsion took on a new quality, and its methods became more brutal from the outset. Above all, the result of the expulsion differed fundamentally from that which had been achieved by [194] September 1, 1939. Now the expellees remained in the fascist sphere and thus exposed to the decision and the grip of their tormentors.

While Heydrich's decree of September 21, 1939 served to prepare the deportations, an order issued by Himmler on October 30, 1939 in his new capacity as Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of the German Nation determined the start, scope and deadlines of the deportation.²² Within four months, between November 1339 and February 1940, all Jews, all "Congress Poles" residing in Danzig-West Prussia and an as yet unspecified group of "particularly hostile Polish population" were to be transported from the former western and northern Polish "now Reich-German provinces and territories" to the Generalgouvernement. The Higher SS and Police Leaders (HSSPF) and the inspectors or commanders of the Security Police were instructed to jointly determine the "resettlement plan".

As early as October 31, 1939, the head of the security police in the Generalgouvernement, SS Brigadeführer Bruno Streckenbach, informed his superior Hans Frank Łódź, where his central authority worked before it was established in Krakow, of the impending order to receive and distribute hundreds of thousands of displaced Poles and "Jews" in closed transports. For his part, Frank instructed the HSSPF in the Generalgouvernement, Wilhelm Krüger, to organize the "refugee transports".²³ In practice, the security police now felt responsible for rounding up the victims of the deportation, loading them, guarding the trains during the journey so that no one escaped, and ensuring that the wagons were transported back quickly so that the flow of displaced persons was not interrupted. At the destinations, the Polish authorities and the Jewish councils created by Heydrich's decree²⁴ were responsible for accommodating the deportees.

If one considers that a terrible social catastrophe was looming in large areas of Poland as a result of the aggression, then one can imagine the desperate situation of those who, dispossessed and expelled, were exposed to an uncertain future in a foreign environment and under the most adverse conditions with hand luggage and the tiny amount of cash they had been granted. In addition, the organization of the expulsion was hasty and partly improvised and the weather conditions worsened daily.

On 12 November 1939, the HSSPF Posen issued the implementation regulations for Himmler's order, which applied to the Reichsgau Wartheland and were characterized as measures to "carry out the great historical task set by the Führer".²⁵ Their text made the occupation policy purposes of the deportation particularly clear, as the aim was "the cleansing

²² Arch. GKBZHP, NTN 332, sheet 10; Order 1/II of the Reichsführer SS as Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationality of October 30, 1939.

²³ Ibid., Hans Frank's diary, (hereinafter: Frank Tgb.); reception of SS-Obergruppenführer Krüger by Frank on October 31, 1939; see also Stanisław Piotrowski, Hans Frank's diary, Warsaw 1963, p. 279

²⁴ ZStA Potsdam, film collection no. 5436, doc. 775.

²⁵ Arch. GKBZHP, NTN 332; Circular of the HSSPF Posen dated 12.11.1939, concerning the deportation of Jews and Poles from the Reichsgau "Warthe-Land".

and securing the new German territories" and "the creation of housing and employment opportunities for the immigrating ethnic Germans". Together with the Jews, "the intellectually leading class, the entire intelligentsia" and all politically active Poles, in particular leading members of parties and associations, committed Catholics, priests and lay people, were to be forcibly deported. A total of 200,000 Poles and 100,000 "Jews" were to be driven eastwards from the Warthegau during the "first action".

However, Poles and "Jews" were treated according to unequal principles from the beginning of "Germanization". For the latter, there were political standards, albeit only roughly outlined, according to which the deportees were to be selected; in principle, there were no exceptions for the latter. This procedure arose above all from the fascists' differing judgment of the suitability of Poles and Germans.

"Jews" as labor slaves. The Jewish inhabitants, mostly merchants, craftsmen and also members of the intelligentsia, seemed to be less suitable and unnecessary for exploitation in industrial and agricultural enterprises and were therefore all considered suitable for deportation. The general expulsion of Poles, on the other hand, would have affected workers who - as the regulations of the HSSPF Posen also stated - "could not be dispensed with".²⁶ In addition, the value of the Polish labor force had long been known to the large landowners in the East Elbe in particular. For decades, they had shamelessly exploited seasonal and other workers from Poland, making them toil on their estates from dawn to dusk, vegetating in barracks-like, inhumane dormitories and not granting them any political, trade union or general human rights. This pariah existence of Polish seasonal workers provided a kind of model for fascist colonial policy in Eastern Europe. At the same time, the non-Jewish population of Poland was seen as a labor pool for the entire agricultural sector of the "old Reich", which was in urgent need of workers as a result of the conscription of farmers and agricultural workers into the Wehrmacht.

Fascist deportation practice was thus determined by real strategic and tactical considerations, of which the material ones were ultimately decisive. At the same time, the direct influence of racial ideology on those involved can also be traced in it, for whom the "Jews" were regarded solely as parasitic subjects, not producing but consuming, as "parasites", in other words, who were supposedly everywhere tapping into the fruits of others' labor and sucking out and weakening the bodies of their "host peoples". From this point of view, the "Jews" in Poland must have appeared to the conquerors as annoying competition, as the German imperialists now wanted to take advantage of the Poles, their labor and their property.

On the fascist scale of the value of peoples, the "Jews" were at the lowest end, below zero, so to speak, and thus beyond the mark that decided between usefulness and uselessness. Even as the "merchant people" that Nazi propaganda had defamed the "Jews" to be, they were now temporarily and conditionally needed in Poland, as the occupiers did not want to trade, but to requisition, not to buy, but to rob.

As surely as the fascist distorted image of "Jewry" itself became the source of anti-Jewish plans and persecution, this image - in the broadest and most complete sense - reflected and served the material interests of imperialism. Moreover, the mendacious image of the unworthy "Jew" was abandoned even by the most fanatical racists when real interests of power and exploitation made it appear necessary. Then the supposedly unproductive and uncreative victims of persecution could instantly be transformed into useful, and in some circumstances even sought-after [196] labor slaves. The history of the persecution of Jews in the Generalgouvernement in particular provides information about this.

The decision to deport inevitably triggered the compulsion to make further decisions as part of the fascist program of conquest. These were: Ghettoization and labour camp imprisonment. At a further meeting between Heydrich and senior staff on January 30, 1940, it was assumed that a "Jewish question" would soon no longer exist in the annexed territories due to the deportations. In the Generalgouvernement, however, it was to be solved by the fact that women,

²⁶ Ibid.

children and other people not fit for work were herded into ghettos and the men fit for work - Heydrich spoke of several hundred thousand Jews - were herded into forced labor camps. The idea was to use the Jewish labor slaves for the "construction of the Wall (meaning military installations on the border with the USSR - K. P.) and other projects in the East".²⁷

This discussion is the earliest evidence that the fascist rulers at least anticipated the killing of thousands of Jewish people as a result of their anti-Jewish policy. The path to the forced labour camps that the Jewish men had to take, like the ghettoization of all other people, would mean their physical and psychological demoralization, and ultimately their decimation through work, hunger, epidemics, harassment of all kinds, climatic and weather-related disasters. The murderous anti-Semitic idea, which had hitherto existed in a general, abstract form, began to take on the shape of a concrete plan. At this point, the decision to murder millions had not yet been made, but a step towards it had been taken, both mentally and practically.

Nevertheless, the fate of the Jewish people in the sphere of power of German imperialism did not depend solely on the decisions of the fascist rulers. The inner logic of their anti-Jewish thinking did not necessarily have to become the logic of history. If the deportation measures in Poland could only be driven forward under the conditions of the "Comic War", the war in Western Europe, once it had broken out, was able to permanently change the plans and possibilities of persecuting the Jews.

The plan to use the Jewish population en masse as the cheapest forced laborers had dominated the specialists of Jewish persecution since the labor situation of German imperialism had drastically worsened with the beginning of the war. It was along these lines that one of the first anti-Jewish laws in the Generalgouvernement on October 26, 1939 made it compulsory for all "Jews" to work and to be deployed in closed forced labour squads.²⁸ Even more important was the simultaneous authorization of the HSSPF in the Generalgouvernement to issue the implementing regulations. The entire life of the "Jews", including their work activities, was thus to be placed directly under the control of the police, i.e. the inspectors and commanders of the Security Police and their apparatuses. The SD's original intention of gaining leading influence over all questions of Jewish persecution had now expanded to [197] giving the RSHA an unrestricted monopoly of control over all Jewish people.

However, it soon became clear that Heydrich's ambitious plans to set up forced labour camps could not be realized. Although the fascists wanted to shamelessly exploit the Jewish people, at the same time they shied away from the costs that the construction of the first four concentration camps for Jewish forced laborers would entail.²⁹ The difficulty of procuring the minimum amount of building materials for these camps was also initially insurmountable in view of the demands that the central authorities of the Reich placed on timber deliveries from the Governor General's Office, among other things.

Thus, the intention to lock up hundreds of thousands of "Jews" in forced labor camps was reduced to the no less brutal practice of herding the Jewish inhabitants of the Generalgouvernement, including able-bodied men, into ghettos that were set up in cities. This did not cause the financial and technical problems associated with the construction of special camps, as the ghettoized were simply forced into residential areas where Jewish people already lived or from which Poles were forcibly displaced. And the inmates

²⁷ ZStA Potsdam, film collection no. 5436, doc. 468; meeting between Heydrich and Seyss-Inquart, HSSPF from the occupied territories of Poland and other SS leaders on January 30, 1940.

²⁸ Albert Weh (i.e. the Head of the Legislation Department in the Office of the Governor General), *Das Recht des Generalgouvernements Krakow* 1940, Doc. 250 - For the implementing regulations issued by the HSSPF for this decree, see *ibid.*, Doc. 251, Doc. 252.

²⁹ Arch. GKBZHP, Frank Tgb. 1940/1/III, p. 25 f.; presentation by Finance President Spindler to the Governor General on the budget situation of 15.1.1940. - In the conversation, Frank objected to the high costs for the organization of forced labour, which were estimated at 90 million zł.

of the ghettos were always on call, especially for their command to any work assignment. The idea of ghettoization and forced labour was thus combined in the cheapest way possible for the fascists, but with the most serious consequences for the victims.

Ghettos were established in the annexed territories as well, as the deportation from the Reichsgouvernement to the Generalgouvernement did not take place at the planned pace and ultimately came to a standstill due to difficulties in the Generalgouvernement and the campaign against France. From December 1939, one of the most notorious was in Łódź, which the conquerors called Litzmannstadt. Gauleiter Greisen had the Jewish inhabitants herded into this town, whose affiliation to the Reichsgau Wartheland or the Generalgouvernement initially remained unclear, in the expectation that they would - one way or another - fall under the responsibility of Franks.

The history of that hell in Łódź is the clearest illustration of the consequences of the rigorous deportation and ghettoization practice and that it in turn had an impact on the thinking and decisions of the fascist leaders. When Greisen visited Krakow in the summer of 1940, one of the things he wanted from the governor general was permission to "deport" the 250,000 inmates of the Łódź ghetto to the Generalgouvernement. Greisen justified this request by stating that the situation in the ghetto had worsened to such an extent that it would not be possible to survive the next winter in terms of food policy or epidemic control. The HSSPF of the Warthegau spoke of a situation that was worsening from day to day. But Greiser's view was thwarted by Frank's firm refusal: the Generalgouvernement was not in a position to take in the quarter of a million Jews "even on an interim basis". The responsible government president Mehlhorn, who accompanied Greiser, nevertheless declared that "the Jewish question" had to be "solved in some way".³⁰

[198] As the secret negotiations in Krakow showed, the fascist persecution of the Jews had reached a critical point, as the question of future policy came down to a matter of life and death. The previous mistreatment of the "Jews" had already largely drained the working and life forces of many people. Every day, more victims were reduced to a state of not being able to live and not being able to die. What had been set in motion as a "historical solution" in September and October 1939 turned out to be an organization of expanding catastrophic and chaotic conditions in the spring and early summer of 1940, when the campaign in Western Europe captivated the world's attention. In line with Heydrich's demand that "practical considerations" be made on the spot, the fascist potentates in Poland - as the Frank-Greiser interview reveals - set about finding their own way out of a situation whose development was threatening to slip away from those who had caused it.

Initially, however, after the first wave of deportations had subsided and "wild transports" to the Generalgouvernement were expressly forbidden³¹, the leadership of the fascist Reich had nothing that could be called a binding overall concept for "solving the Jewish question". Frank's speeches, which were held between March and May 1940, provide some information about schools of thought, controversies and distant plans. According to these speeches, the German central authorities had formed the opinion that the Generalgouvernement "east of the Vistula was increasingly being considered as a kind of Jewish republic", to which the Jewish population from both the newly annexed and the old territories of the fascist state were to be deported in their entirety. Frank spoke of "a number of Jews to be determined at will", which would be brought from the Reich.³²

There were differences of opinion within the fascist leadership at the time, as can be seen from a speech given by Frank to district and city captains of the Lublin district on March 4, 1940, regarding the speed at which the "Jews" were to be transported. Only after "the most difficult

³⁰ Ibid., 1940/2/IV, pp. 741 ff.; discussion between Frank and Greiser and members of his entourage on July 31, 1940.

³¹ According to a statement by Frank, Göring had decided on February 12, 1940, in the presence of Himmler, not to carry out any deportations without the approval of the Governor General (ibid., 1940/2/IX, p. 176; Frank's speech at an official meeting of the district and city captains of the Lublin district on March 4, 1940).

³² Ibid., p. 176 f.

The view that the Reich could not be "cleansed of Jews" during the war had prevailed.³³

During the first half of 1940, however, the idea that the Generalgouvernement would not be the last stop for the deportation of Jews emerged, at least in the minds of individual fascist rulers. It also corresponded most closely to Frank's personal wishes, who obviously did not consider it very honorable to be the ruler of a "Jewish reservation". Although he did not know "what other general governorates and protectorates would be created"³⁴, he was increasingly preoccupied with the vague idea of one day being able to drive the "Jews" further eastwards. As early as the beginning of May 1940, Frank said that changes to the eastern border of the Generalgouvernement could consist of this border being "driven further eastwards [199] by events".³⁵ When the fascist troops marched on Paris, he told senior police officers on May 30, 1940: "Perhaps the eastern border we have today is not the last development." The Generalgouvernement was "one of the most important areas of the coming world empire of the Germans" and part of "the great bridge to the East, the end of which we cannot yet see".³⁶

The policy of persecuting Jews, which had not been decided centrally but was nonetheless pursued in the Generalgouvernement as a provisional measure, was thus given the appropriate interpretation. Everything that happened was declared to be an interim solution, the Generalgouvernement was seen only as a temporary "reception basin" for Poles, Gypsies and "Jews"³⁷, as an area in which the "Polish working underclass was to be Germanized in the long term", i.e. there could be no room for the "Jews" not worthy of Germanization in the long term. Everything would be solved in new wars and with new victories ...

In fact, the fascist conquests in Northern and Western Europe during the spring and summer of 1940 changed the situation. After large parts of the future Jewish population in six other European states had fallen into the hands of the fascists, the "solution to the Jewish question" also took on the practical dimension that it had already had in the minds of the extreme anti-Semitic racists. They now wrote openly about "a future pan-European settlement of the Jewish question emanating from the German Reich".³⁸ A new formula emerged in the discussions within the Reich headquarters of the fascist regime and between the rulers in occupied Poland: Deportation of European "Jews" overseas. Frank and Greiser also pinned their hopes on this, initially still undefined.³⁹

The fact that the plans of the fascist racists had entered a new stage at the beginning of the war did not immediately bring about a general change in Jewish policy in the entire sphere of power of German imperialism. For the time being, there was a considerable difference between the anti-Jewish measures in Poland and within the borders of the Reich territory as it had existed until August 31, 1939. Here, the strategy of expulsion abroad was still followed. Even under wartime conditions, the decree issued by Hermann Göring in his capacity as Commissioner for the Four-Year Plan on January 24, 1939, continued to apply, the introductory sentence of which stated: "The emigration of Jews from Germany is to be promoted by all means."⁴⁰ In a communication from the RSHA to the Stapo offices and their subordinate institutions, it was still stated on May 20, 1941: "According to a communication from the Reich Marshal of the Greater Germany

³³ Ibid., p. 177.

³⁴ Ibid., 1940/4/IX, p. 402; Frank's speech at the Reichsarbeitsstagung des Hauptamtes für Kommunale Politik in Katowitz on March 15, 1940.

³⁵ Ibid., 1940/1/IX, p. 65; Frank's speech to the Reich Defense Committee of the General Government in Warsaw on March 2, 1940.

³⁶ Ibid., 1940/3/IX, 131. 340, p. 370; Speech and closing remarks by Frank at the police meeting on May 30, 1940.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 335 f.

³⁸ P. H. Seraphim, Der Rassencharakter der Ostjuden, in: Das Vorfeld, 1st vol. 1940, 3rd installment (November 1940), p. 11.

³⁹ Arch. GKBZHP, Frank Tgb., 1940/2/IV, Bl. 741; discussion between Frank and Greiser and members of his entourage on July 31, 1940.

⁴⁰ Rolf Vogel, Ein Stempel hat gefehlt. Documents on the Emigration of German Jews, Munich 1977, p. 291; letter from Göring to the Reich Minister of the Interior dated January 24, 1939.

Reich (Göring - K. P.), the emigration of Jews from the territory of the Reich, including the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, is to be intensified during the war [200] within the framework of the given possibilities and in compliance with the established guidelines for the emigration of Jews."⁴¹

At this time, the fascist occupation area already included Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, large parts of France, Yugoslavia and Greece in addition to Poland. In fact, the German rulers also determined the domestic policy of a number of other European states, such as the clerical-fascist satellite regime in Slovakia. There were Jewish people living in all of these states and territories who were trying to escape their tormentors. For this reason, the RSHA's May decree - not for the first time, incidentally - established the absolute priority of expulsion from Reich territory, which was to be carried out primarily via Spain and Portugal. In the opinion of the RSHA, further success in this policy could only be achieved if emigration from occupied France and Belgium in particular was prevented, since, as things stood, an emigration flow from these countries could only be to the detriment of the "solution of the Jewish question" in the "Greater German Reich". Only individuals in the conquered territories were to be allowed to move to unoccupied France. However, the Main Office reserved the right to make its own separate decision in each case.

Twice in the decree of May 20, 1941, Heydrich explicitly mentioned "the undoubtedly coming final solution of the Jewish question". This reference was not merely a declaration of intent. The RSHA, the Foreign Office and other offices of the fascist state and the NSDAP had been working intensively on "final solution projects" since the summer of 1940. This happened after the French-English armed forces had been defeated on French territory, in the megalomaniacal assumption that they were and would remain the masters of Europe. The fascist designers of the European post-war order believed that they could dictate anything and everything to the defeated in a peace treaty, thus ending the war with a "practice Versailles" and then deciding at will when they wanted to start the next war that would extend beyond the continent.

As only a few leading figures in Hitler's entourage were aware of the emerging plan in the early summer of 1940 to attack and destroy the USSR within a short period of time and possibly after the capitulation of Great Britain, it was not yet included in the deliberations of those who drew up new plans for the "Final Solution". These agencies were working on the assumption that a peace treaty was imminent. In the draft "The Jewish Question in the Peace Treaty", which was prepared by Foreign Office employee Franz Rademacher on July 3, 1940, it was stated as follows: "The imminent victory gives Germany the opportunity and, in my opinion, also the duty to solve the Jewish question in Europe."⁴² England was therefore already considered 'defeated' because it was deemed incapable of standing up to the German Reich and its allies on its own in the long term.

In this supposedly final stage of the war, the RSHA endeavored to be involved in all debates, elaborations and decisions that took place with a view to the conclusion of peace. The "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" was also to be bindingly planned under its leadership. This interest of the RSHA was dictated by the idea that the previous policy of expulsion would not lead to the goal.

[201] In a letter from Heydrich to Ribbentrop dated June 24, 1940, the success of the expulsion policy was emphasized once again and it was pointed out that since January 1, 1939, around 200,000 Jews had been forced out of the Reich territory and that the flow of refugees had not completely dried up "even during the war". However, Heydrich then stated:⁴³ *"The overall problem - there are already around 3¼ million Jews in today's*

⁴¹ ZStA Potsdam, film collection no. 5436, doc. 441.

⁴² Arch. GKBZHP, NTN 332, unpag. (= Nuremberg doc. NG-2586).

⁴³ ZStA Potsdam, film collection no. 5436, doc. 464.

German sovereignty - can no longer be solved *by emigration*. A territorial final solution is therefore necessary."

In the early summer of 1940, the fascist power apparatus was therefore looking for a new overall strategy to "solve the Jewish question", which would treat the various "Jewish problems" that had arisen in the course of the fascist occupation as a whole and in a unified manner. In the new strategy that began to emerge at this time, the line of expelling Jewish people from the sphere of power of German imperialism, which was in fact linked to the uncontrolled dispersion of the expellees by the fascists to large parts of the world, was abandoned and the aim was to concentrate the "Jews" in an area to which they were to be forcibly deported and in which they were to be forcibly detained. At the end of June, Heydrich was not yet able to be more specific to the head of the Foreign Office, who had a leading role in the preparation of a peace dictate. He merely asked Ribbentrop "to be involved by the RSHA in forthcoming discussions dealing with the final solution of the Jewish question, should such discussions be planned from there (!)." ⁴⁴

Over the next two months or so, the "Madagascar Project" was drawn up as a proposal for the "territorial final solution". Its central idea was: "All Jews out of Europe". ⁴⁵ Rademacher attributed the authorship of this plan, which took up older anti-Semitic plans and reshaped them in line with German imperialist world domination policy, to himself and the "Jewish Department" he headed in the Foreign Office. After the Reich Foreign Minister had "approved the preparatory work for the deportation of the Jews from Europe", the project was "enthusiastically received by the Reich Security Main Office" in an early drafting stage and concretized into "a detailed plan for the evacuation of the Jews to Madagascar". Himmler had approved the plan ⁴⁶, so that it was sent to the fascist central offices involved, including the Foreign Office, on August 15, 1940. ⁴⁷

The conceptual premise that preceded the multi-page document was: "Previous practice has shown that the solution to the Jewish problem in the territory of the Reich, including the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, *by means of emigration* ... can hardly be completed in the foreseeable future. After the arrival of the masses from the East, a solution to the Jewish problem through emigration has become impossible." ⁴⁸ From this, the specialists in the persecution of Jews in the RSHA concluded that a different path would have to be taken in order to get rid of four million "Jews" - the total number in the Fascist sphere of influence was put at this figure - for good.

In terms of foreign policy, the Madagascar project was one of those multi-layered plans that were all aimed at establishing a post-war world under German domination. In this respect, it is a testimony to the absolute excessiveness that characterized the thinking and actions of the fascist rulers and their compliant state bureaucrats. The infamous overall idea was based on the expectation that the German imperialists would gain so much power as a result of the war that they could oblige the defeated states in a peace dictate to hand over their citizens of Jewish origin to the Hitler fascists for better or worse. Even the neutral states were to be forced to drive their Jewish citizens into the arms of the organizers of the "territorial final solution". ⁴⁹ Such plans could only be considered feasible by those who believed in them,

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Arch. GKBZHP, NTN 332, unpag.; The Jewish Question in the Peace Treaty. Rademacher's elaboration of July 3, 1942 (= Nuremberg Doc. NG-2586).

⁴⁶ Ibid.; Luther's note of August 21, 1942 (= Nuremberg Doc. NG-2586).

⁴⁷ Ibid.; letter from SS-Obersturmführer Dannecker, Reich Security Main Office, to Rademacher, AA, dated August 15, 1940 (= Nuremberg Doc. NG-2586).

⁴⁸ ZStA Potsdam, film collection no. 5435, doc. 172.

⁴⁹ Arch. GKBZHP, NTN 332, unpag.; Rademacher's note of 12.8.1940 "Thoughts on the foundation of an inter-European bank for the realization of Jewish assets in Europe" (Nuremberg Doc. NG-2586). - This proposed state treaties "to be concluded with the individual European countries on the settlement of the Jewish question."

that in all defeated and neutral states, governments and power apparatuses could be permanently established that were consistently fascist or parafascist in nature. Thus, the Madagascar Plan to a certain extent tacitly presupposed the consolidation of a Europe ruled by German imperialism.

In detail, the Madagascar Plan⁵⁰ envisaged the cession of the French colonial island in the Indian Ocean to the German Reich and the resettlement of the French people living there. The island was then to serve a dual purpose: The German imperialists intended to turn it into a military base for air and naval forces and, at the same time, into a huge concentration camp for the Jewish people of Europe. The deportation of these people to Madagascar was planned within four years, as the originators of this project estimated that no more than one million people could be transported by sea each year. On the island, which was to be headed by a fascist "police governor", i.e. an SS general, the deportees were destined for the hardest work, in which the fascist rulers intended to take part just as much as they had already taken part in the expropriation of the people destined for deportation. In fact, the designers of the Madagascar Plan intended to force the governments of all European states not only to hand over the Jewish inhabitants, not only to provide shipping space for the deportation, but also to transfer the property of the victims to an "inter-European bank for the utilization of Jewish assets in Europe", which was of course intended as an institution of German fascism.⁵¹

The Madagascar Plan thus also represented a kind of summary of the vile ideas and practices that had characterized the fascist persecution of the Jews for years. It concentrated the plans of robbery and expropriation, the forcible deportation to labor camps, the extortion of labor under penalty of death by starvation and the direction and control of all these infamous measures by Heydrich's security police. At the same time, the millions of Jewish [203] inhabitants of Madagascar were to form a gigantic bargaining chip in the hands of the fascists, which they intended to use against those "Jews" living predominantly in the USA. Millions of hostages - these were also to be the deportees.

The project planners in the RSHA and the Foreign Office were not concerned about the fate of the inhabitants of Madagascar or the lives of the victims destined for deportation. What was veiledly called a "place of residence for Jews" and was only to be inspected by a police task force seemed suitable to the fascists as a place of deportation and concentration camp because the conditions there were expected to bring about a "natural" decimation of the deported victims. The "overseas solution of an insular character", which in the opinion of the RSHA was "preferable to any other"⁵², was designed to expose the deportees to adverse climatic and weather conditions, devastating epidemics and exhausting labor, constant shortages of food and other sources of life, mental dullness and the omnipresent SS terror - conditions that many of the victims would not be able to withstand, or only for a short time. The Madagascar Plan therefore meant more than just a "territorial final solution".

For a short time, the anti-Jewish measures in conquered Poland were also influenced by the development of this project.

Two days after a conversation with Hitler, which Frank had held on July 8, 1940, the Governor General informed his HSSPF Krüger of the new regulation, according to which Jewish resettlements from the territory of the Reich would no longer take place. All "Jews" included in the Generalgouvernement would be "transferred to the colonies of Africa ... which the French government must hand over to the German Reich for this purpose".⁵³

⁵⁰ Not all of the papers produced by the fascist state apparatus on the "Madagascar Plan" contain the characteristics of the project summarized below.

⁵¹ Arch. GKBZHP NTN 332, unpag.; Rademacher's note of August 12, 1940.

⁵² Ibid.; Madagascar project in the version of the Reich Main Security Office as sent out on August 15, 1940.

⁵³ Ibid., Frank Tgb., 1940/2/IV, Bl. 646; discussion between Frank and the HSSPF Krüger on July 10, 1940.

On 25 July 1940, Frank announced to officials and employees of the fascist district administration in Lublin that the Generalgouvernement would be "free of Jews" in the foreseeable future due to a special "program". Lublin could then become "a decent, official, professional and also humane city for fellow Germans".⁵⁴

In July 1940, however, the fascist rulers in occupied Poland were concerned about the question of how quickly this "final solution" could be realized. During the negotiations between Frank and Greiser on July 31, the HSSPF pointed out to Krüger that memoranda already existed on the matter, but the head of the security police in the General Government, Streckenbach, dampened exaggerated expectations with the remark that the when and how was a question of time.

"Question of the peace treaty" and only then would it be finally determined whether the "Jews" should actually come to Madagascar.⁵⁵

Overall, the notes in Frank's diary confirm that in July 1940 the fascist rulers no longer regarded the concentration of several million "Jews" in eastern [204] Poland as a solution that was appropriate to the ever-expanding Germanization plans in Eastern Europe.

Although the Madagascar Plan remained a piece of paper, the murderous world of thought in which the designers of the "final solution" operated continued to take shape during its preparation. While the majority of fascist politicians, military officers and economic specialists were planning, preparing and organizing the military conquest of the USSR, departments of the same apparatus of power, in close contact with Hitler, Himmler and Heydrich, were drafting the most heinous, top-secret plans, which were increasingly clearly directed towards the goal of killing people of Jewish origin en masse. As new ideas about the duration of the war emerged, the experiences and problems of the fascist persecution of Jews in Poland, especially in the General Government, "where the Jewish question is most pressing", moved back into the center of planning.⁵⁶ It was publicly written that the spatial, social and economic confinement of the ghettos demanded "pressure relief and a solution".⁵⁷

While the winter of 1940/41 was draining Jewish people inside and outside ghettos and forced labor camps and snuffing out the lives of many, work on another criminal plan against the "Jews" was completed. On 28 March 1941, the head of the party chancellery, Viktor Brack, informed Himmler of the conclusion of investigations aimed at the mass sterilization of "Jews". The living generation of Jewish people was to remain alive, but their reproduction was to be prevented. For this purpose, the construction of about 20 facilities would be necessary, with the help of which about 3,000 to 4,000 people could be sterilized daily without those affected immediately noticing the atrocity being committed against them.⁵⁸ This diabolical plan also presupposed that the "persons to be sterilized" would be territorially concentrated and strictly isolated.

The months following the capitulation of France, in which the fascist rulers reached the peak of their influence in Europe and believed themselves to be the unrestricted masters of the continent in the near future, were thus also characterized by the fact that the inspirers and organizers of the racist terror and, in particular, the persecution of the Jews were gradually approaching the plan to physically annihilate the living generation of Jewish people. The formula of the "final solution to the Jewish question", which had already been used by the state bureaucracy soon after the handover of power to the Hitler fascists, now took on its infamous, gruesomely criminal meaning.⁵⁹ The process of transition from the strategy of expulsion abroad, which in any case only existed as a remnant from the pre-war period, to the strategy of mass extermination entered its final stage.

⁵⁴ Piotrowski, p. 331.

⁵⁵ Arch. GKBZHP, Frank Tgb., 1940/2/IV, p. 743; discussion between Frank and Greiser and his companion on July 31, 1940.

⁵⁶ Seraphim.

⁵⁷ Heinrich Gottong, Die Juden im Generalgouvernement, in: Das Vorfeld, vol. 1, 1940, 3rd installment, November 1940), p. 20.

⁵⁸ ZStA Potsdam, film collection no. 5436, doc. 556.

⁵⁹ See Pätzold, p. 138 ff.

As the fascist documents and the persecution of the Jews prove, the murder plan that was finally realized was developed over several intellectual and practical stages during the first two years of the war. At the first stage of the project's construction, it was not yet the direct murder of millions of "Jews" that was to bring about their extermination, but rather the intention was to expose the victims to conditions under which their [205] lives would inevitably be extinguished sooner or later, depending only on their varying degrees of resistance. On a second level of construction was the plan that envisaged the non-procreation of the living generation of Jewish people through sterilization, which de facto already meant a direct physical and deadly attack on existing life and not just the extinction of potential human existence.

From this point, it was only a small step for the fascists to mass murder: for if there was not to be a future generation of Jewish origin, why bother so much with the living one? This question had to arise in the minds of the planners - one would like to say: with necessity - and never cease to be reflected in new "final solution" designs, especially since the self-inflicted catastrophic and infernal conditions on the territory of Poland during a longer period of war seemed to them to be untenable.

It is characteristic of the criminal and ultimately murderous documents produced in the fascist headquarters since the beginning of the war that their content is almost exclusively determined by the question of *how* people of Jewish origin could be seized, concentrated, removed and exploited. General justifications for the persecution of the Jews hardly played a role in the internal elaborations. Inferiority and unworthiness of the

"Jews" were considered an axiom by the fanatical fascists. Now they only practiced what followed from the thesis that the "Jews" - as Himmler had already publicly stated in 1935 - were the people "composed of the waste products of all the peoples and nations of this globe".⁶⁰ At the height of their power, which they themselves understood to be only a beginning and not a culmination, the fascist racists naturally set about eliminating this "refuse" from history. To the extent that they even bothered to come up with justifications for the persecution of the "Jews" for the public since the beginning of the war, they made no secret of the fact that they were only making claims for the sake of it.

The decisive phase in the transition to the strategy of genocide took place in the second half of 1941. On July 31, 1941 - the fascist imperialists had invaded the USSR and their armies were marching towards Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev - Göring issued Heydrich with the new directive, "to make all necessary organizational, factual and material preparations for an overall solution to the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe". Heydrich had to present an overall draft "in the near future", which was to contain the "preliminary measures" for the "final solution".⁶¹ In retrospect, the Madagascar Plan was "overtaken by political developments", according to a memo by Luther, Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office.⁶²

Göring's directive to Heydrich of 31 July 1941 referred once again to the previous directive of 24 January 1939, which had allegedly contained the order to "bring the Jewish question to the most favorable solution possible in the form of emigration and evacuation in accordance with the circumstances of the time". In reality, there had been no mention of "evacuation" after the pogrom of the "Reichskristallnacht". This correction was merely intended to make it possible to argue that the new decree supplemented the old one. In reality, however, the previous strategy of persecuting the Jews was abandoned. The next step was to systematize the diabolical plans for the genocide and present them in a final, practicable version. Such a version was made known to the participants of the so-called Wannsee Conference six months later.

⁶⁰ Heinrich Himmler, *Die Schutzstaffel als antibolschewistische Kampforganisation*, Munich 1936.

⁶¹ ZStA Potsdam, film collection no. 5436, doc. 461.

⁶² Arch. GKBZHP, NTN 332, unpag.; note by Undersecretary of State Luther dated August 21, 1942 (= Nuremberg Doc. NG- 2586).

The preparations for and the beginning of the invasion of the USSR thus also marked the deepest turning point in the history of the fascist persecution of the Jews. The fact that 22 June marked a "turning point in the history of suffering", especially for Polish Jewry, was emphasized in research by Polish historians after the end of the war. From then on, the fascist conquerors "from isolated pogroms, executions and above all individual murders", as they had been committed against the Jewish population of Poland from the first moment of the invasion, to mass murder. The "limbo", as the period between September 1939 and June 1941 was also called, was followed by true hell.⁶³

Those who practiced the bloody trade did not see the development fundamentally differently. Wisliceny wrote in 1946: "From the outbreak of the war with Russia and the entry of the USA into the war, a fundamental change began to take place in the treatment of the Jewish problem. This change did not take place overnight, but gradually."⁶⁴ At the beginning of 1942, Rademacher assessed the significance of the aggression against the USSR for the genesis of the "Final Solution" plans were very similar: "The war against the Soviet Union has now made it possible to make other territories available for the final solution of the Jewish question (than Madagascar - K. P.). Accordingly, the Führer has decided that the Jews are not to be deported to Madagascar, but to the East."⁶⁵

During the first few months of the campaign against the USSR, the blitzkrieg concept of the fascist rulers failed, but they initially conquered large areas of the country. These initial successes were linked to the hope of achieving the goal set for 1941 and defeating the USSR in 1942. Accordingly, post-war planning, especially for Eastern Europe, was once again euphorically pursued. The Generalgouvernement was given a new political and geographical status in the minds of the fascist planners. In the long term, it was to be completely Germanized in order to fulfil the function in the "Vorfeld" that Frank had been thinking about for some time.

The problem of the physical destruction of millions of people, which seems to contradict capitalist principles of the exploitation of labor and profit-making so completely, must also be analyzed in the context of this planning, which surpasses everything that has gone before. Bourgeois authors repeatedly raise the question of whether a regime that acts in this way can still be described as capitalist and should not rather be called anti-capitalist.

The invasion of the USSR and the associated need to turn the annexed [207] Polish territories and the Generalgouvernement into a functioning supply base increased the value of the labor of the Jewish people in this area to a certain extent and for a limited period of time. At a meeting of the Reich Trustees of Labor of the Eastern Territories on October 9, 1941, Greiser declared that he was glad "that he had 200-300,000 Jews in the Gau. They could do a lot of work that could not be done otherwise." This assessment of value was immediately further characterized by the addition that "Jews" and Poles were to be regarded as "one workforce", "which we would have to face without feeling". The "question of nationality" would always remain the "supreme principle".⁶⁶

More important than such short-term pragmatic discussions is the fact that the fascist conquerors - as was particularly evident in the elaborations of the "General Plan East" - planned from the awareness that they already had an abundance of people in the conquered territories. In a statement dealing with the deportation, displacement and extermination of millions of people - Russians, Poles, "Jews" - this way of thinking was reflected in the laconic sentence

⁶³ Dokumenty i Materiały do Dziejów Okupacji Niemieckiej w Polsce, vol. II. Akcje i Wysiedlenia, Część, edited by J. Kermisz, Warsaw, p. IV, p. XI.

⁶⁴ ZStA Potsdam, film collection no. 5436, doc. 773.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Doc. 762; letter from Rademacher to Bielfeld dated February 10, 1942.

⁶⁶ Arch. GKBZHP, Prozeß Greiser, vol. 37/IV, p. 627; Report on the meeting of the Reich Trustees of the Work of the Eastern Territories in Posen on October 9, 1941.

again: "We have the enormous human reservoir of the East before us."⁶⁷ Problems of the permanent subjugation of these people, who, together with the members of other peoples who had come under fascist control, already far exceeded the number of Reich and "ethnic Germans", dominated the project planners of the reorganization of the European East as far as the Urals in 1941/42, and not concerns about a shortage of labour.

The question of how the decision to exterminate the Jewish population on a mass scale came about in the power apparatus of a capitalist regime is posed unhistorically if it is detached from the concrete historical circumstances to which it refers and transposed to the later situation of the turning point of the war and the emerging crisis of the regime. At this later point in time, the fascist leaders viewed many issues differently. However, the murderous plan for the "final solution of the Jewish question" was already in full swing.

The war - at the time when the unimaginably barbaric decisions were made, this was first and foremost the war against the USSR. In the summer of 1942, it was characterized by an offensive by the fascist Wehrmacht, which in turn resulted in huge land gains and led to the Caucasus and Stalingrad. This success once again gave rise to the most megalomaniacal and criminal ideas and plans. Now that Germany was at war with all the great powers, with the exception of Japan, the last political and ideological barriers that had stood in the way of the cruelest, complete and short-term "final solution to the Jewish question" also fell in the face of the irrefutable either-or, which consisted in the total victory or total defeat of German imperialism.

Ultimately, it was the basic idea of being able to put world history entirely under the boot of fascist German imperialism that brought about the decisions presented at the Wannsee Conference and guided their realization. The Jewish people of Europe became the victims of a strategy that belonged to a broader imperialist concept: the plan of German imperialism to dominate the world, to establish fascist "law" in it for all time and to decide over the life and death of dozens of peoples.

The crime against the Jewish population of Europe therefore did not simply stem from a murderous ideology that resided in the minds of a few Nazi leaders. It was ultimately caused by the excessive goals of German imperialism, whose basic and overall interests were championed by those fascist leaders. At a time when a stable socialist state existed and many peoples were seeking and pursuing their own paths to national and social liberation, it was anachronistic to want to establish a permanent fascist world empire, it was historically and objectively hopeless. But even the attempt was bound to produce its specific barbaric means and methods.

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⁶⁷ Quoted in VfZ, 3/1958, p. 311 f.; Opinion and Thoughts on the General Plan East of the Reichsführer SS (by Dr. Erhard Wetzel).

Manfred Weißbecker: Fascism in the present. Foundations - Manifestations - Activities - Organizations¹

As the history of our epoch shows, the ruling circles of imperialist countries have repeatedly tried to get out of the ever denser and more complicated web of their internal contradictions and their manifold crises by various and diverse means, above all with the help of a bloated armaments apparatus, aggressive policies and military adventures. In the individual periods of the general crisis of capitalism, this urge of monopoly capital has lawfully intensified. This has always gone hand in hand with attempts of various kinds to stabilize its domestic political power positions and to make anti-democratic, authoritarian modifications to its form of rule. As a rule, the phases of acute crises and intensifying class struggles proved to be times of an extraordinarily anti-human, militant and extremely reactionary negation of all social progress and even of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, i.e. a stronger emergence of organized ultra-right and fascist forces.

Even in the present, which in the imperialist states is characterized by a very special kind of intertwining of general and cyclical crisis², influential state monopolist groups are trying to escape the deepening of the general crisis with militaristic³ and right-wing extremist⁴ means. They are using all available means - including their parties and other social organizations - to promote the development of the military-industrial complex, they are pushing for rearmament, they are fighting against the results of the struggle of the socialist states and progressive forces for the implementation of the principles of peaceful coexistence and political and military détente. [They are making every effort to stop the growth of socialism and to hinder the development of the other main currents of the revolutionary process. Their aim is to get out of the historical defensive and regain lost areas of influence.⁵ The internal difficulties caused by the crisis of capital stimulate the efforts of the most aggressive circles of the monopoly bourgeoisie to expand the arms race, to escalate international conflicts, to return to the conditions of the "Cold War" period and to slow down, disrupt and even reverse the policy of détente. All this inevitably means not only an escalation in international relations and in the ideological clashes between socialism and imperialism⁶, but also an intensification of the clashes between the various monopoly groups and their political representatives.

These and many other factors contribute significantly to the growing differentiation in the monopoly bourgeoisie, which today is once again giving right-wing extremist and even openly fascist forces considerably more space in the political organization of imperialist society⁷ - and thus

¹ The article, which was completed in March 1978, is a continuation and supplement to the following articles by the author: *Wesen und Erscheinungsformen des gegenwärtigen Faschismus*, in: *IP W-Berichte*, 8/1975; *Extrem reaktionäre Organisationen und werktätige Massen*, in: *ZfG*, 3/1977; *Extrem reaktionäre Organisationen und die Realität der Gefahr des Faschismus in der Gegenwart*, in: *Gegen Imperialismus und bürgerliche Ideologie. Wiss. Beiträge der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena*, Jena 1977.

² See Erich Honecker, Report of the Central Committee to the IX Party Congress of the SED, Berlin 1976, p. 23.

³ See Albrecht Charisius/Klaus Engelhardt, *Militarismus heute - Hauptfeind von Entspannung und Sicherheit*, in: *Einheit*, 6/1977, p. 729 ff.; Horst Fiedler, *Wesen und Erscheinungsform des Militarismus der Gegenwart*, in: *IPW-Berichte*, 8/1977, p. 9 ff.

⁴ See Ludwig Elm, *Der "neue" Konservatismus. Zur Ideologie und Politik einer reaktionären Strömung in der BRD*, Berlin 1974, p. 66 ff.

⁵ See Erich Honecker, *Die Aufgaben der Partei bei der weiteren Verwirklichung der Beschlüsse des IX. Parteitages der SED*, in: *Neues Deutschland*, from 18/19.2.1978.

⁶ See Kurt Hager, *Der IX. Parteitag und die Gesellschaftswissenschaften. Speech at the conference of social scientists of the GDR on November 25 and 26, 1976 in Berlin*, Berlin 1976, p. 24.

⁷ See V. E. Guliyeu, *Der imperialistische Staat in der Gegenwart*, Berlin 1976, p. 45 ff. - On the discussion of the term among Soviet social scientists, see N. I. Azarov/J. M. Penkov, *Der imperialistische Staat in der Gegenwart*. N. I. Azarov/J. M. Penkov, *Die politische Organisation der Gesellschaft (Literaturübersicht)*, in: *Sowjetwissenschaft. Gesellschaftswiss. Contributions*, 5/1973, p. 501 ff.

The bourgeois bourgeoisie, including in the field of bourgeois parties and interest organizations, offers more opportunities for fascism than in the first two decades after 1945. To some sections of the monopoly bourgeoisie, fascism - modernized and modified, of course - once again appears as a possible way out of a situation in which they see their power and the level of profit seriously threatened. This phenomenon - which should not be overestimated, but above all not underestimated - does not contradict the generally recognized fact that the "climate" of our time has become unfavorable for fascism. The roots of the still existing danger of fascism lie in the continued existence of imperialism, in its striving for profit and expansion and in its unchanged fundamental hostility to progress. However, this danger also results from the

The "climate" has not changed the acute capitalist crisis processes in the economic, social, political and ideological fields. It threatens peace and the progress achieved so far by the forces of socialism in the process of détente as well as the social progress of people in many parts of the world. Rapid changes in the politics and ruling methods of imperialism cannot be ruled out.

1. The fight against fascism and reaction is the order of the day

Numerous documents of the international workers' movement⁸ have already warned of the resurgence of fascism and of neo-fascist dangers, have called for great vigilance and emphasized the need to resist the [211] beginnings and to nip attempts to renew fascism in the bud. Here are just a few of the many analyses and appeals:

In the spring of 1973, representatives of communist and workers' parties from 21 capitalist countries met in Essen (West Germany) for an academic symposium devoted to the topic of "Contemporary Fascism and the Reality of its Danger".⁹ K. I. Sarodov, editor-in-chief of the journal "Problems of Peace and Socialism", explained in his speech that in the coming years the revolutionary workers' movement and its allies will face an arduous struggle against imperialism, reaction and fascism.¹⁰ The result of the discussion was summarized in emphatic words: "A strengthening of the struggle against fascism, neo-fascism and reaction is a *gift of the time*."¹¹

In October 1973, the World Congress of Peace Forces in Moscow drew attention with great seriousness to the worrying resistance of the imperialist military-industrial complex and the openly fascist and racist regimes to the worldwide peace offensive launched by the XXIV Party Congress of the CPSU. The communiqué made special reference to the fascist coup in Chile on September 11, 1973, which showed "what a great danger the policy of the imperialist, reactionary forces represents for the peoples who have chosen the path of freedom, of independent, autonomous political and social development. The overthrow of the legitimate government of the Unidad Popular under Salvador Allende is a reminder that the international monopolies, the forces of external and internal reaction are ready to counterattack at any moment, including armed overthrow, the establishment of a military dictatorship and a bloody reckoning with the people."¹² The participants of an international round table discussion, which took place in April 1974 at the Institute for Marxism-Leninism at the Central Committee of the SED and was attended by representatives of the scientific institutes of ten brother parties, called for an intensified fight against fascism and neo-fascism.¹³

⁸ See above all: International Consultation of the Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow 1969. Documents, Berlin 1969, p. 40 f.

⁹ See Der gegenwärtige Faschismus und die Realität seiner Gefahr, (in the following: Der gegenwärtige Faschismus), in: PFS, 4/1973, p. 471 ff.; 5/1973, p. 619 ff.

¹⁰ Ibid., 4/1973, p. 482.

¹¹ Ibid., 5/1973, p. 646 (emphasis mine - M. W.).

¹² Neues Deutschland, from 4.11.1973.

¹³ See BzG, 4/1974, p. 690 f.

The conference of the communist parties of the capitalist countries of Europe, which met in Brussels at the beginning of 1974, also pointed to the significantly increasing "authoritarian tendencies" in the big bourgeoisie, which were an expression of the spreading crises of capitalism.¹⁴ The participants at the Berlin Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe at the end of June 1976 emphatically underlined their joint demand to "eradicate fascism, prevent its re-emergence - in open or disguised form - and combat the organization and activity of fascist and neo-fascist terrorist organizations and groups as well as racist propaganda and activities ..."¹⁵

[212] The coup of September 11, 1973 and the further developments in Chile have brought the problems of fascism back into the consciousness of the people. In the face of the economic and political crises in many imperialist countries, the question arose as to whether fascism and "Chilean solutions" were also possible elsewhere.¹⁶ The Soviet social scientist A. I. Sobolev rightly concluded from the Chilean case: "Although the possibilities of bourgeois liberalism have not yet been exhausted, today the struggle between the two variants of the way out of the crisis that has now gripped capitalist society takes first place: between the democratic-revolutionary and the reactionary-fascist variant."¹⁷

The representatives of peace movements, political parties and mass movements, international and national organizations, delegates from 125 countries of all continents and 50 international organizations, who united in May 1977 for the World Assembly of Builders of Peace in Warsaw, accused the most aggressive circles of international monopoly capital of "taking refuge in fascism in the present severe economic crisis and depression of the capitalist system ... to take refuge in fascism". Against trivializing and underestimating the danger of fascism, they declared: "Fascism and neo-fascism appear today in many new forms, without having changed their character as an openly terrorist dictatorship of the most aggressive and reactionary circles of monopoly capital once they have come to power." In their appeal to all the peoples of the world, they simultaneously developed a comprehensive and differentiated tactic of the anti-fascist struggle, demanding,¹⁸

- to expose all overt and covert methods of propagating fascist ideology on a national and international level;
- to create a united anti-fascist movement in every country, involving all people of good will, regardless of their social status, political convictions and world view;
- to condemn the practices of reactionary dictatorships that use fascist methods of violence and oppression;
- to be vigilant and expose the resurgence of neo-fascist groups and other activities of far-right forces that are increasingly practising violence and terror;
- to further isolate the fascist regimes internationally in order to effectively support the anti-fascist struggle waged by the peoples of these countries under conditions of terror; it is particularly important to expose all forms of economic and military aid in order to force the governments that grant them to end them;
- to intensify efforts to provide material and moral support to the fighters against fascism and the victims of fascist regimes. In view of the

¹⁴ Neues Deutschland, from February 1, 1974.

¹⁵ For peace, security, cooperation and social progress in Europe. Document of the Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe, in: Einheit, 8/1976, p. 853.

¹⁶ See Der BRD-Imperialismus und das militärfaschistische Regime in Chile, in: IPW-Berichte, 5/1974, p. 46 f.

¹⁷ A. I. Sobolev, What Chile teaches, Part I, in: horizont, 21/1974, p. 25.

¹⁸ We call upon all nations and peoples. Appeal of the Warsaw World Assembly of Builders of Peace. Quoted from die tat, May 20, 1977, p. 16.

power of the multilateral monopolies, the international solidarity of the trade unions is of particular importance."

[213] The strategy and tactics of the revolutionary forces all over the world developed in the above-mentioned and many other documents are based on the assumption that the danger of fascism must be assessed as real and that it is therefore important to combine the general tasks of the struggle against imperialism and militarism with the specific tasks of the anti-fascist struggle. This includes the necessity of carefully analysing all manifestations and developmental tendencies of contemporary fascism, of generalizing the experiences and lessons of the previous struggle against fascism, whereby a firm Marxist-Leninist foundation was laid in the analysis of fascism by the Communist International in the 1920s and 1930s¹⁹.

On this basis and in direct reference to Georgi Dimitroff's remarks, Sarodov presented the most comprehensive definition of contemporary fascism to date: This was the "fascism which adapts itself to the conditions of the present stage of the general crisis of capitalism, to the new grouping of forces within the capitalist world and in the international arena. This is an expression of the striving of the most reactionary elements of monopoly capital to halt the irreversible process of the disintegration of the old order not simply by violating democratic rights and freedoms, by brutal police reprisals and persecutions, by anti-worker legislation, but also by establishing an openly terrorist, counter-revolutionary dictatorship. This is a fascism that is generally subservient to US imperialism."²⁰

2. Beaten, but still dangerous

The situation of contemporary fascism is largely characterized by the fact that, after its total defeat in 1945

- has never succeeded in regaining power in any of the main imperialist countries, not even during the "Cold War";
- It was only possible to maintain old fascist dictatorships and establish new ones on the periphery of the imperialist world system;
- It is difficult - but not impossible - to rebuild a broad and arbitrarily manipulable mass base of blinded and fanatical members of the rural and urban middle classes;
- Despite various maneuvers, only in relatively few cases has it succeeded in distancing itself from the crimes of the historically discredited fascism of the first stage of the general crisis of capitalism, "traditional" fascism, in the eyes of the masses.

This expresses the fact that imperialism is increasingly subject to the compulsion to adapt itself to the new external and internal conditions of existence that have arisen with the struggle of the revolutionary workers' movement and the toiling masses against [214] it. The process of adaptation, which is one of the decisive characteristics of today's imperialism,²¹ does not, however, take place in the essence of imperialism, but only in its forms, in the mechanism of its functioning, which gives it a very contradictory character. The dialectical unity of the compulsion to adapt and resistance to this has a formative character for imperialist politics. Thus imperialism itself tries to use the new conditions, characterized by the forced recognition of many principles of peaceful coexistence, to gather its own forces and regain lost positions.

¹⁹ See Erwin Lewin, *Zur Faschismus-Analyse durch die Kommunistische Internationale (1922-1933)*, in: BzG, 1/1970, p. 44 ff.; Elfriede Lewerenz, *Zu einigen Fragen der Faschismus-Analyse der Kommunistischen Internationale in Vorbereitung des VII. Weltkongresses (1933-1935)* in: Ebenda, 5/1971, p. 733 ff. See also the contribution by Elfriede Lewerenz in the present volume, p. 21 ff.

²⁰ *Der gegenwärtige Faschismus*, in: PFS, 5/1973, p. 644.

²¹ Lutz Maier, *Dialectics of Adaptation. On some new problems of the analysis of imperialism*, in: *Einheit*, 4/1972, p. 514.

to abuse it. Its most aggressive circles, in particular, put up considerable, militant resistance to the continuation of détente, intensified the arms race, opposed the materialization of détente through arms limitation and disarmament, and "unleashed rampant anti-Communist and anti-Soviet agitation".²²

The complicated dialectical interrelationship, so characteristic of contemporary imperialism, between those factors that make the "climate" unfavorable for fascism and those factors that bring with them an increase in the real dangers of fascism, runs through the entire history of fascism to date. The urge for fascism was and is part of the reactionary nature of the monopoly bourgeoisie, even if today the means and forms of reaction are in part different than in the first stage of the general crisis of capitalism. Fascism - whether as a political current or as an openly terrorist form of rule - was and is a form of reaction of finance capital and especially its most reactionary, its most aggressive parts to the changed conditions of the class struggle since the general crisis of capitalism unfolded and the process of decline of the capitalist system began, since humanity entered the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism with the Great October Socialist Revolution.

In contrast to the present situation, in the first period of the general crisis of capitalism, the emergence and development of fascism represented *one* of the possible responses of monopoly capital as a whole, the entire ruling class, to the new conditions of class struggle after the Great October Socialist Revolution and after the entry into the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism. At the same time, they embodied *the* response of the most reactionary forces of the ruling classes.²³ "Traditional" fascism was therefore both an expression of overall monopoly bourgeois interests and a specific representative of the interests of certain groups or factions of the monopoly bourgeoisie, whose profit-threatened economic situation and aggressive political conception conditioned an extremely reactionary relationship to the working class, its political organizations and the bourgeois parliamentary forms of rule. The Marxist-Leninist historiography of the GDR in particular has shown in detail which sections of the German monopoly bourgeoisie especially promoted and supported National Socialism and the fascist Hitler dictatorship.²⁴ In view of the activities of the US and FRG monopolies in Chile and in favor of numerous neo-fascist groups, it is an important task for Marxist social scientists to investigate the same for present-day fascism - this should be mentioned here in passing - regardless of the undoubtedly difficult source situation. However, it is even more important to prove the identity and essential similarity of monopoly capitalist interests and fascism and to analyze under which historical and concrete conditions of development fascist forces and ideas can rise to the surface like putrid bubbles from the swamp of imperialism.

At the beginning of the 20th century, imperialism was able to determine the fate of most peoples on earth. Its laws were basically identical to those of world development. After the First World War and the Great Socialist October Revolution, the development of imperialism, at least in its own sphere of rule, was still taking place "to a certain extent according to the logic of imperialism's own laws".²⁵ For German imperialism, for example, this meant that its strategic goal was the complete, albeit only gradually achievable, revision of the results of the lost First World War and, building on this, its supremacy in Europe and in large parts of the world, whereby an essential prerequisite was that the results of the November Revolution, i.e. those fought for by the working class, were to be implemented.

²² See Kurt Hager, *Der IX. Parteitag und die Gesellschaftswissenschaften*. Speech at the conference of social scientists of the GDR on November 25 and 26, 1976 in Berlin, Berlin 1976, p. 23.

²³ See Manfred Weißbecker, *Entteufelung der braunen Barbarei*. On some recent tendencies in West German historical writing on fascism and fascist leaders, Berlin 1975, p. 25.

²⁴ See the literature references in: *Ibid.*, p. 104.

²⁵ See Maier, p. 514.

democratic rights and freedoms. This strategic concept led to the intensification of internal and external contradictions, to the steady right-wing development in the Weimar Republic, to the fascist dictatorship and finally to the unleashing of the Second World War. Although fascist German imperialism failed - had to fail by law because of the superior power of socialism and the anti-fascist struggle of the peoples united in the anti-Hitler coalition - the concept of revenge of West German imperialism after the restoration of the power of the monopolies and militarism corresponded in many respects to this "model" of the 1920s and 1930s, especially vis-à-vis the German Democratic Republic.

However, it soon became apparent that such a possible development was even less inevitable than in the first period of the general crisis of capitalism. Imperialism developed after the end of the Second World War under the influence of the ever-increasing worldwide revolutionary process, whose main force is the world socialist system that emerged after the victory over fascism in the Second World War. In the present, therefore, fascism is less and less *one* or even *the* only answer or variant of imperialist policy. The historical situation of imperialism has changed decisively: Its possibilities to organize different systems of rule are limited. The intensification of the general crisis of capitalism has placed clear limits on its ability to adapt to the changed situation through modernized practices in the economic and social conception as well as in the regulation of power relations. Imperialism can neither afford far-reaching parliamentary-demo-[216]cratic methods²⁶ nor can it easily and without major risks switch to openly fascist forms of government. It sees itself forced to seek new combinations of both basic methods of bourgeois rule. Which political forms and methods of rule the monopoly bourgeoisie resorts to is today, in view of the changed balance of power, less than ever at its sole discretion. Many internal and external factors influence this decision, in particular the strength, willingness to fight and actions of the working class in these countries.

With the changes in the conditions of imperialism's existence and in the balance of power between imperialism and socialism, the balance of power between fascism and anti-fascism has also shifted considerably in favor of the latter. It is above all for these reasons that the efforts to restrict the existing bourgeois-democratic forms of rule in the main capitalist countries below the threshold of the transition to fascism, so to speak, and to make bourgeois-parliamentary democracy authoritarian to its utmost limits, occupy an important place in the tactics of the ruling class.²⁷ The political order of most imperialist countries today can be characterized as "limited bourgeois democracy".²⁸ Horst Stuckmann, who sees the development of the right in the FRG as the most burning problem, behind which neo-fascism is emerging as a real danger, speaks in this context of a "continued reduction of democracy", which is not yet itself neo-fascist.²⁹ The tendency towards the increased use of conservative-

²⁶ Right-wing and right-wing extremist ideologues in the FRG also fought against a policy based on Willy Brandt's 1969 formula "dare more democracy" on the grounds that it was a "strategy for overcoming the system". See Helmut Schelsky, Die Strategie der "Systemüberwindung", in: Schelsky, Systemüberwindung, Demokratisierung und Gewaltenteilung - Grundsatzkonflikte der Bundesrepublik, op. cit. 1973, p. 19 ff. - With another bourgeois ideologue of conservatism, the same thoughts led to the monstrously demagogic formula: "The more reactionary elements become effective in society, the more progressive and viable it is" (Deutsche Zeitung/Christ und Welt, 11.6.1976).

²⁷ See Hermann Kahn, Vor uns die guten Jahre. Ein realistisches Modell unserer Zukunft, Vienna/Munich/Zurich/Innsbruck 1977 - Kahn concludes from his analyses that in the future some of the so-called democracies of Western character "will probably have authoritarian rather than genuinely parliamentary governments" (p. 281) and develop an "increasing capacity ... to violence and destruction" (p. 250). See also Ekkehard Lieberam, Krise der Regierung - ein neues Thema bürgerlicher Staatsideologie, Berlin 1977.

²⁸ Der politische Mechanismus der Monopoldiktatur, Berlin 1977, p. 26 ff.

²⁹ Horst Stuckmann, Rechtsentwicklung und Neofaschismus in der BRD, in: Kurt Gossweiler, Faschismus und antifaschistischer Kampf, Frankfurt a. M. 1978, p. 63, p. 48.

authoritarian methods of rule may well turn into fascism in certain situations. The most reactionary forces are trying to create favorable conditions for the development of fascism in the event that it has to be resorted to and brought from the reserve position to the front line. At present, however, this is not yet dominant, on the contrary: imperialism is even making quite intensive efforts to dismantle the still existing fascist regimes, as it has done in Greece since 1974 and in Spain since 1976/77, without any real anti-imperialist, revolutionary changes. These changes, praised as "democratization", are intended to ensure that the overthrow of fascist dictatorships, which the working class and its allies are striving for and which is in many respects [217] inevitable, can be kept under control, does not endanger the monopoly capitalist positions of power as a whole and does not lead to a strengthening of the forces of historical progress, especially the communists.

With such a strategic socio-political conception, which is fundamentally based on the historical defensive position of imperialism, but which can nevertheless be closely linked to offensive actions against the working class and the toiling masses, the role of the extremely reactionary forces and organizations within the political organization of society and the bourgeois party and association system naturally changes.³⁰ From the former party and organizational political supporters of the fascist dictatorship, adapted neo-fascist organizations are developing which, despite their occasional transition to seemingly "moderate" positions, reflect the objective discrepancy between the interests of the ruling class and those of the masses.

This is a major reason for their dwindling influence among the masses, for their increasing fragmentation and for the growing brutalization of their appearance. The fact that these are not peculiarities in the development of those states which have been under fascist rule up to recent times is clear from the similarity of these phenomena and tendencies in all imperialist countries.

3. Diverse manifestations of fascism today

In order to grasp the nature of contemporary fascism correctly and completely, its "traditional" and new manifestations and its organizations must be analysed. The following sections are intended to serve this purpose.

a) Fascist dictatorships

The *first* manifestation of fascism in the post-war period was the dictatorships established in the first period of the general crisis of capitalism, which could be maintained for several decades after 1945, but no longer since the mid-1970s. The history of the final phase of fascism in Portugal and Spain allows interesting conclusions to be drawn on our topic.

When Caetano replaced Salazar in Portugal in 1968, he deliberately presented himself as "modern", "liberal" and

"reformist"; however, in view of the defeats in the hopeless colonial war and the growing popular resistance, he soon returned to the old brutal means of rule. Only the change of name for the fascist party and the notorious political police remained permanent³¹ until the democratic movement [218] of the armed forces and the progressive forces under the leadership of the Portuguese Communist Party put an end to fascism. Since the contradictions were not eliminated with such a "modernization" of the regime, the only solution was a revolutionary explosion, which led to far-reaching changes of an anti-fascist and even anti-imperialist character.

³⁰ See Weißbecker, Extrem reaktionäre Organisationen, p. 282 f.

³¹ The Gestapo of the fascist regime, Policia Intelligencia del Estado (PIDE) = Secret State Police, was renamed "General Directorate for Security" in 1969. Chile's military junta followed this example and gave its Gestapo the name DINA (Direccion de Informaciones Nacional = National Information Center).

The revolutionary events in neighbouring Portugal and emphatic "recommendations", particularly from the USA, played a decisive role in ensuring that certain sections of the Spanish ruling class persistently pursued the gradual "modernization" of the Francoist dictatorship after Franco's death.

As the Francoist regime wanted to counter the growing resistance and pressure from the anti-fascist democratic forces with increased terror, but also with an orientation towards close alignment with the EEC and the USA and with the appearance of changes towards democracy, a complicated and contradictory situation arose.

The main bloc of the ultra-right was the "Popular Alliance", founded in 1975, whose leaders included six former Franco ministers. At their first congress in Madrid in March 1977, the reactionary Spanish parties represented in this alliance decided to take further steps towards transforming themselves into a unified right-wing party. The formation of new bourgeois and reformist parties as part of the preparations for the first parliamentary elections in June 1977 was intended to counteract the great influence of the workers' commissions and the Spanish Communist Party.

At the same time, the government supported or inadequately combated remnants of the "Falange" (or the Francoist collective movement "Movimiento" that emerged from it), which often refer to themselves as "bunkers" in reference to Hitler's last place of residence, as well as new right-wing extremist and fascist organizations. As the "Apostolic Anti-Communist Alliance", "Christ the King Fighters" ("Guerilleros de Christo Rey"), "Kommando Adolf Hitler", "Federation of Veterans of the Civil War" (with around 400,000 members), "Command for the Fight against Marxism", "New Force" ("Fuerza Nueva"), "National Brotherhood of the Guard Franco", "National Spanish Union", "Comunion Tradicionalista", "Frente Anticomunista Español", etc., these fascist organizations launched one wave of terror after another. Their interest was and is to "create a mood of terror and provoke massive violent crimes ...; to create a cauldron of atrocities and counter-reactions, so that in the end the Spanish army intervenes and restores order - as close to the old order as possible".³²

The same applies to Portugal, where a democratic order was established in the three years following the fall of the fascist dictatorship, but³³ right-wing and fascist organizations are conducting provocative campaigns against the workers' movement, the armed forces and all progressive forces. The revanchist-colonialist Democratic Social Centre (CDS) in particular is pursuing a course of action aimed at establishing a new reactionary dictatorship,³⁴ supported by even more right-wing organizations such as the 5,000-strong "Portuguese Liberation Army" (ELP), the "Committee for the Defence of Freedom" (CDL) and the "Independent Movement for National Reconstruction" (MIRN) led by General Kaúlza de Arriaga.

At the beginning of 1977, the General Secretary of the Portuguese Communist Party, Alvaro Cunhal, emphasized that the "fascist conspiracy" was continuing. The central organ of the PKP, "Avante", stated in February 1978 that the fascist reaction was uniting anew and mobilizing all forces "so that the danger emanating from it could take on a more real form in Portugal". At the same time, "Avante" referred to anti-communism and anti-Sovietism as the decisive ideological "substance of fascist propaganda".³⁵

The second form is embodied by the fascist dictatorships that emerged after 1945. These include, above all, the Pinochet regime in Chile since September 11, 1973.

³² The Swedish upper middle-class newspaper "Dagens Nyheter" came to this conclusion. Quoted from Junge Welt, January 29/30, 1977.

³³ See the assessment of the situation by Alvaro Cunhal at the VIII Party Congress of the PKP in Lisbon, in: Neues Deutschland, 12.11.1976.

³⁴ See Neues Deutschland, from March 5, 1976.

³⁵ Ibid., dated February 24, 1978.

other military dictatorships³⁶ in Latin America³⁷. As in the first period of the general crisis of capitalism, there are several causes for the establishment of new fascist power structures in the present. However, three sets of causes stand out in particular, which are very closely interlinked, but at the same time cause not insignificant differences in the individual forms of terrorist rule:

1. The establishment of a fascist regime is carried out above all with the aim of obstructing the path to progress for the forces united in the working class action unit and the anti-imperialist popular front in decisive phases of the class struggle. In situations that represent a real threat to the power of the monopoly bourgeoisie, its most reactionary and aggressive forces clutch like drowning men at the straw of the apparently necessary possibility of saving their own positions with the help of fascism and overcoming the historical defensive position of imperialism in an offensive of violence. The interests of the respective nationally organized big bourgeoisie usually coincide with those of world imperialism, especially when the latter is particularly interested in the strategic position of the country in question. This was the case in Chile in 1973 and in Greece in 1967.

Recent history has revealed more and more that the initiative for fascist attempts at subversion lies with US imperialism, which relies on the internal reaction of a country to realize its anti-communist and anti-relaxation plans. This new aspect in the history of fascism was pointed out by P. Mavromatis, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece, during the Essen Symposium, when he explained that Greece had already become an important pillar in the global strategy of US imperialism against the socialist countries and the national liberation struggle of the peoples before the establishment of the military dictatorship. The democratic movement of the Greek people had jeopardized these plans: "The military-fascist putsch carried out in April 1967 with the help of the Americans was intended to guarantee that Greece would continue to be a springboard for imperialist aggression."³⁸

In Chile, too, it became clear that the decisive forces of world imperialism do not shy away from initiating and supporting the use of the most brutal violence and the liquidation of bourgeois democracy to the best of their ability when the existence of the capitalist social order is at stake or when it is a matter of preventing one country or another from breaking out of the imperialist system.

2. At the same time, the turn to new fascist or semi-fascist forms of rule took place with the intention of asserting its own hegemonic claims, including the desire for economic expansion.³⁹ This close interrelationship between the main contradiction between capital and labour and the opposition between monopoly capital and the masses on the one hand and the contradictions of an intra-imperialist nature on the other, which was decisive for the establishment of the Hitler-fascist dictatorship in Germany in 1933, is also likely to have played a major role in the fascization of Brazil, for example. Competition and rivalry do not exclude the conscious leaning on international monopoly capital, especially the USA, since as a rule one's own plans cannot be realized without the support of foreign capital, not without bringing in multinational monopolies. Thus, with the support of the USA, monopoly capital in Brazil is seeking the traditional confrontation with Argentina in order to decide the hegemony in South America in its favor and to develop its own "sub-imperialism".

3. Fascist regimes were ultimately able to develop where securing and maximizing profits were very closely linked to the desperate, sometimes military, struggle of the ruling classes.

³⁶ On the problem of distinguishing between fascist regimes and military dictatorships, see the fundamental statements on "Military and Fascism" in Gossweiler, p. 18 ff.

³⁷ See the article by Eberhard Hackethal in this volume, p. 237 ff.

³⁸ See *Der gegenwärtige Faschismus*, in: PFS, 5/1973, p. 620.

³⁹ See *The revolutionary experiences of the communists. The particularities of the present stage of the anti-imperialist struggle in Latin America*, in: PFS, 5/1974, p. 676.

class is linked to the maintenance of racism and colonial practices. Thus, the ruling circles in South Africa have set in motion a "creeping fascism", with the help of which an extensive system of repression has been created by the Nationalist Party since 1948 to oppress, exploit and disenfranchise the numerically predominant African population as well as the "white" proletariat. The illegal Communist Party of South Africa clarifies the particularities of fascism in its country when it declares: "What is happening in the country today is not simply the product of 25 years of rule by an extremely dangerous fascist party. It is also the result of centuries of aggression, annexation, resettlement of the African tribal population and their brutal exploitation by Dutch and British colonialism. Only under conditions in which the vast majority of the people were denied all democratic and civil rights could the neo-Nazi Nationalist Party come to power."⁴⁰

The existence and forms of existence of the new fascist or semi-fascist regimes, whose politics and situation cannot and need not be described in detail here, illustrate the dialectic of offensive-terrorist actions and the historical defensive position of imperialism. This can be seen in a serious way in the fact that these regimes hardly got beyond attempts and approaches to form system-stabilizing parties and associations. Although the fascist military junta of Chile was able to rely on some organizations - e.g. "Fatherland and Liberty" (Patria y Libertad), the Catholic "Work of God" (Opus dei), the ultra-right "National Party of Chile" and to some extent the "Christian Democratic Party" - when preparing and carrying out its coup of 11 September 1973, it had to gradually push back even the right-wing parties and associations.

The Greek colonels had the same experience in the years of their fascist dictatorship from 1967 to 1974. They also failed to build one or more organizations with mass influence. The characteristic feature of collaborationism⁴¹ and subordination to the interests of world imperialism, especially US imperialism, which is characteristic not only of Greek fascism but of contemporary fascism in general, met with resistance from all anti-fascist and patriotic forces.

The situation of right-wing extremist organizations is somewhat different in some Latin American countries, where some reactionary military dictatorships have gradually become fascist. In Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and other states, parties are permitted and certain rules of bourgeois parliamentarianism are practised. To illustrate the character of these distorted images of bourgeois parliamentarianism, it should be noted that until 1976 in Paraguay, the "Asociación Nacional Republicana", the so-called Colorado Party of the dictator Stroessner, automatically received 20 of the 30 senatorial seats and 40 of the 60 seats in parliament in accordance with electoral legislation.⁴² At the same time, ultra-right-wing organizations such as the Brazilian "death squads" are running the terrorist business of fascism.

b) Right-wing extremist potential and fascization processes

The right-wing development observed in a whole series of imperialist countries and the gradual transformation of bourgeois-democratic regimes into conservative-authoritarian regimes and fascist dictatorships also demonstrate the dangerous nature of contemporary fascism. At the same time, however, they make it clear that turns to the right, fascist processes and the establishment of fascist dictatorships are not only linked to the emergence and growth of fascist organizations. Fascism in the period before the Second World War was characterized by the parallelism of two processes in the area of executive power. In the context of the development of state-monopoly capitalism, the merging of the apparatus of the

⁴⁰ Contemporary fascism in: PFS, 5/1973, P. 625.

⁴¹ See Konstantin Zarodov, *Suščnost' neofašizma i nekotorye voprosy taktiki kommunističeskogo dviženija*, in: *Sovremennyy fašizm: ego oblič'e i borba s nim*, Prague 1975, p. 14.

⁴² See Neues Deutschland, 21/22.8.1976. Further developments in Brazil, for example, will show whether the use of parliamentary means also contributes to the decomposition of fascist and fascistoid forms of rule.

monopolies and the state, a process of fascization of the state took place on the one hand and a process of nationalization of the fascist party on the other. Today, in view of the new situation for the fascist parties, which - at least so far - has hardly allowed them to build mass organizations, the fascization of imperialist countries consists to a lesser extent than in the past in the merging of the state or state monopoly apparatus with parties and organizations of a fascist character. Rather, "the state mechanism itself has become an enormous incubator of fascist germs", i.e.: "The state fascizes society."⁴³ The new fascist regimes are generally not bound to a one-party system. Attempts are often made to manage without parties or to liquidate the party system completely.

When considering the manifestations of contemporary fascism, the strong right-wing extremist potential that exists in a number of instruments of monopoly-bourgeois rule and social organizations in non-fascist countries must not be ignored. This potential - the *third* manifestation of contemporary fascism alongside conservatism, revanchism and racism - is to be found above all in the leadership of the army and the police, the judiciary and the state bureaucracy, as well as in the right-wing bourgeois parties of almost all highly developed imperialist countries. It is no coincidence that prophylactic considerations for a "Chilean solution", i.e. for a coup by the reactionary military in the event of escalating domestic crises, are being made above all in the officer corps of imperialist countries. Examples of this are known from Italy, but also from West Germany and other countries. Anti-communist and anti-Soviet "cultivation of tradition" often provides the framework for the inclusion of large sections of soldiers and former military personnel in a variety of organizations, the vast majority of which cannot be directly characterized as fascist. The anti-Semitic and racist excesses of Bundeswehr officers are noted with disgust in all parts of the world, and protests are made against the de facto impunity for those who organized "symbolic Jewish denominations", used the fascist salute "Heil Hitler" at guard changes or attended and supported so-called comradeship meetings of traditional SS associations. The democratic world public also reacted with indignation to police protection for neo-fascist rallies and demonstrations, even when their participants spread such inhumane slogans as "Rotfront verrecke" (die Red Front), "Sweep away the red rabble" and "The Reds are not spreading, you have Zyklon B in the house".⁴⁴ In a similar vein, the fact that the judicial authorities of the FRG are more concerned with and prevent the prosecution and conviction of Nazi and war criminals than they are with prosecuting and convicting them is met with decisive rejection.

The growing number of attempts to rehabilitate and once again glorify Hitler fascism and its leader must also be seen as a precursor and, in certain respects, as an ideological reflex of this manifestation of contemporary fascism. Especially in the FRG, efforts to revive the dead "heroes" of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism and to use them to pursue politics against historical progress have been increasing in recent years. It is obvious that the propagandistic "marketing" of the history of fascism, the so-called Hitler renaissance and the entire "wave of counter-enlightenment",⁴⁵ is also intended to lead the working masses to broad approval for the conservative-authoritarian restriction of democratic rights and freedoms. This is why the [223] mass media spread such thought patterns as: Anyone who wants to eliminate unemployment, who wants to ensure order and security, who wants to see "terrorism" combated, must also be committed to the "strong state", to a "strong man". On the other hand, the model of a subject who believes in and obeys the authorities is to be reasserted, not least through the scandalous practice of banning people from working.⁴⁶

⁴³ V. E. Gulyev, *Democracy and Imperialism*, Berlin 1972, p. 177.

⁴⁴ die tat, 10.3.1978, p. 2; see also Dietrich Gayko, *Das Anwachsen des Neonazismus - Ausdruck gefährlicher Rechtstendenzen in der BRD*, in: IPW-Berichte, 1/1978, p. 51.

⁴⁵ See Stuckmann in: Gossweiler, p. 62.

⁴⁶ See Ludwig Elm, *Berufsverbot im Bildungswesen. Zu aktuellen antidemokratischen Bestrebungen in Schule und Hochschule der BRD*, published by the Institute for Higher Education, Berlin 1974.

The great "wave" of books, films, records and magazine series is very differentiated in terms of content and ranges from partial justification of the "Third Reich" to the "demonization" of fascism to the glorification of Nazism, from the trivialization of fascist crimes to their complete denial. This "wave" is much more than a political fringe phenomenon that many politicians in the FRG like to talk about; as a result, fascism should once again appear as "conceivable, acceptable, even as a way out of the crisis misery".⁴⁷

The potential of the most reactionary forces in the FRG is therefore not only to be found in the openly neo-Nazi organizations, but also - as H. Adler and H. Pötschke rightly point out - in the "organized revanchism, in various right-wing extremist interest groups and 'circles of friends', in the senior officer corps of the Bundeswehr and not least in the CSU led by F. J. Strauß and in CDU circles".⁴⁸ The fact that extremely reactionary tendencies are spreading in the bourgeois parties, especially in their right wing, enables the fascist forces in some countries to support the conservative and militantly anti-communist parties openly or in disguise.

The right-wing extremist potential, which is essential for the fascization processes, also includes the application of fascist methods and practices in certain areas of imperialist politics. For example, the cruel American warfare in Indochina⁴⁹ and certain terrorist traits in Israel's policy of aggression and annexation towards the Arab countries and the people of Palestine are comparable to the fascist methods of Hitler's total warfare in Germany. The bloody liquidation of half a million Indonesian communists and the oppression of national or racial minorities in several capitalist countries were equally fascist in character. These include not only the notorious apartheid policy in South Africa, but also the barbaric treatment of the Indians in Brazil or the colored citizens (ten percent of the population!) in the USA. To some extent, the imperialist system of rule uses fascist methods in individual areas - especially against national minorities - although the system as a whole cannot be described as fascist. [224]

c) Fascist organizations and movements⁵⁰

Contemporary fascism is most widespread in its *fourth* manifestation, i.e. in the form of the fascist-type organizations and movements that exist in almost all imperialist countries with a "parliamentary" form of rule. The political and social function of these organizations⁵¹ is the same everywhere: they form an additional means of pressure on the working class that complements the state-monopoly mechanism of power; they are needed by the monopoly bourgeoisie to justify its authoritarianism directed against democracy and historical progress and represent a reserve in the event that the maintenance of the remnants of bourgeois democracy appears to monopoly capital to be unsuitable for securing its power. Both in their existence and in the functions of these right-wing extremist organizations,

⁴⁷ die tat, from 9.9.1977, p. 11.

⁴⁸ H. Adler/H. Pötschke, Neofascist Activities in Western Europe, in: IP W-Berichte, 12/1974, p. 43.

⁴⁹ Democratic US Senator McGovern described the massive bombing of defenceless farmers in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as a moral defeat for the USA and declared: "It is the most barbaric act perpetrated by any modern power since the death of Adolf Hitler" (quoted from R. Lettau, Täglicher Faschismus. Amerikanische Evidenz aus 6 Monaten, Leipzig 1973, p. 201).

⁵⁰ See the list (p. 232 ff.) of the best-known right-wing extremist and fascist organizations in the appendix to this article, which is essentially based on the assessments of the communist parties in the countries concerned.

⁵¹ See Der gegenwärtige Faschismus in: PFS, 5/1973; A. Galkin, Der Faschismus erleidet Niederlagen, die Gefahr des Rechtsradikalismus bleibt, in: PFS, 12/1974, p. 1609; Hans Pirsch/Karlfried Pröger/Max Schmidt, Monopolherrschaft und Neonazismus in Westdeutschland, Berlin 1969; Reinhard Kühnl u. a., Die KPD. Struktur, Ideologie und Funktion der neofaschistischen Partei, Frankfurt a. M. 1969; Manfred Weißbecker Die historisch-politische Funktion des Neonazismus und der Nationaldemokratischen Partei in Westdeutschland, in: ZfG, 7/1968; derselbecker, Wesen und Erscheinungsformen des gegenwärtigen Faschismus, IPW-Berichte 8/1975.

Fascist organizations openly reflect the anti-human and anti-human rights nature of imperialism.

In West Germany, the National Democratic Party of Germany (KPD) was formed and developed as an openly neo-fascist organization at the end of 1964.⁵² After temporary failures and setbacks in federal and state elections since 1969, this party has been able to increase its membership to around 15,000 in recent years. According to official figures from the Bonn government, in 1975 there were a total of 148 such right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi organizations and 121 Nazi press organs with an annual circulation of more than 11.6 million copies. In reality, these figures are certainly somewhat higher.⁵³ Cautious estimates put the number of right-wing extremist organizations at around 600. If the annual report of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution for 1977 only mentions the number of 93 organizations with 17,800 active members⁵⁴, then this is based on the official government line that right-wing extremism and neo-Nazism are merely a "brown pop dance" built up by the left and, in contrast, the "danger" of the "right-wing extremist".

"Left-wing extremism" as the main threat to the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany.

There are currently three tendencies among the open and undisguised neo-Nazi organizations. The first - represented by the KPD - is undergoing a process of reorganization and reorientation. According to the KPD federal executive, the "party of KPD voters" is to be transformed into a "The "Young National Democrats" already form the actual and active core of the KPD.⁵⁵ The JN are also trying, not without success, to recruit unemployed young people.⁵⁶ A second large group of openly neo-Nazi organizations is the collective movement "National-Freiheitliche Rechte", founded in 1972 by Gerhard Frey, which is primarily active in the field of journalism. It includes organizations such as the "Deutsche Volksunion", the "Jugendbund Adler", the "Aktion Oder-Neiße" (AKON), the

"Deutsche Block", the "Arbeitskreis Volkstreuer Verbände", the "Stahlhelm-Kampfbund für Europa", the "Wiking Jugend" and others.⁵⁷ In addition to the two movements mentioned above, another one has emerged in recent years. It is often referred to as "new right-wing extremism" and comprises organizations that mainly engage in terrorist activities and see themselves more or less as the vanguard of a new NSDAP. These include the "German Citizens' Initiative" of the former lawyer Manfred Roeder, the "Citizens' and Farmers' Initiative" of the journalist Thies Christophersen, the "Kampfbund Deutscher Soldaten" of the publisher Erwin Schönborn, the

"Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann" in Nuremberg. Similar Nazi combat groups already exist in Mainz and Schleswig. The most conspicuous at present is the "Action Front of National Socialists", which is led by the former German army lieutenant Michael Kühnen. This Kühnen - to mention just one of his actions - laid wreaths in the Nuremberg Justice Building on October 16, 1977 and stuck up posters with the following text: "On October 16, 1946, the Jewish-Bolshevik subhumanity murdered the German Reich government. She died with the words: Long live Germany. Her life, her death - our duty. The fight begins."⁵⁸ Kühnen received a prison sentence for this, but it was suspended on "probation". The judge also ordered Kühnen to perform 80 hours of service in a children's home as probation. What a punishment: the fascist is thus given the opportunity to spread his neo-Nazi ideology even among children!

Until it was banned, the French "Ordre Nouveau" acted publicly with the same social-demagogic, sometimes even seemingly anti-capitalist slogans as its predecessors. In England, the chairman of the Association of British Military Volunteers, Paul A. Daniels, demanded in 1974,

⁵² See above all Kühnl et al.

⁵³ See also Georg Herde, *Entspannungsfeindliche Organisationen in der BRD*, in: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, 5/1977, p. 552 ff.

⁵⁴ See *Frankfurter Rundschau*, dated August 4, 1977.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, dated March 21, 1978.

⁵⁶ *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, May 2, 1978.

⁵⁷ See Jörg Berlin et al, *Neofaschismus in der Bundesrepublik. Activity, ideology and function of right-wing extremist groups*, in: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, 5/1978, p. 530.

⁵⁸ Quoted from *die tat*, from 21.7.1978 p. 4.

the seizure of power by General Walter Walker, who was commander of the NATO forces in Northern Europe until 1972, while at the same time neo-fascist organizations such as those under Colonel David Stirling developed concepts for the use of paramilitary units against striking workers. In recent years, the neo-fascist and racist "National Front" has come to the fore as the most active and largest organization. In some local elections, it received up to 19 percent of the vote.

One of the largest fascist organizations currently in existence is the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), which, in conjunction with around 250 radical right-wing terrorist groups, pursues a "strategy of tension" in order to create a climate of insecurity, torpedo democratic reforms and make the Apennine Peninsula ripe for a new "strong man" with murders, bomb attacks [226] and provocative outrages (over 1500 in Rome alone between 1969 and 1976). One of the first major actions, a bomb attack in the agricultural bank in Milan's Piazza Fontana in December 1969, left 17 people dead and well over 50 injured. The attack was attributed to anarchist groups. Senior Italian police officials deliberately misdirected the manhunt, while the military secret service SID helped three assassins to flee abroad. It was not until early 1977 that seven leading neo-fascists were brought to trial for their authorship of and involvement in the crime.⁵⁹

The election defeat of June 20, 1976 did nothing to change the "strategy of tensions".⁶⁰ In response to the drop in votes from 9.2 to 6.4 percent, some MSI leaders attempted to found a new right-wing party or to transform the MSI into a party of "moderate neo-fascists". But those who call themselves "national democrats"

The "moderate" fascist forces around Covelli and Manco have since been expelled from the MSI.⁶¹ At the 11th party congress of the MSI in January 1977, Almirante and Romualdi, two old fascists, propagated a "Chilean solution" for Italy. With frenetic applause, the delegates celebrated Pinochet, Franco, Vorster, Jan Smith and other fascist-racists with cheers.

"Leader". The unconstitutionality of the MSI as the successor organization to Mussolini's National Fascist Party is obvious. Despite insistent demands from the majority of the population, it has still not been banned.

The neo-fascist organizations are also targeting government power, as the Italian example clearly shows. Almirante, for example, declared that the "national right" in Italy was ready to "replace this state".⁶² The strategy of the neo-fascist "rise to power" moves in three directions. Firstly, it is pursuing the goal of forming a large right-wing coalition; secondly, it is itself interested in winning as many votes as possible in order to be able to govern together with the Christian Democrats. Finally, it also aimed to prepare and carry out a coup d'état in collusion with certain forces in the state apparatus, as the attempt of December 9, 1970 showed and recent revelations about the intentions and connections of the neo-fascists have shown once again.

The political and ideological link in all of their efforts is militant anti-communism. Almirante combined his declaration of readiness for the takeover of the state by the "national right" with a call to Italian youth to prepare for a direct, even physical confrontation with the communists.⁶³ On May 29, 1969, "Il Borghese", one of around 60 neo-fascist newspapers in Italy, printed what MSI senator Mario Tedeschi had declared at a meeting of the "Gruppi di Azione Nazionale": "Ruin by all means those who are friendly to communism and a council republic ... I cannot be any clearer here, but everyone who wants to do this work, and our groups too, know very well

⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, dated January 28, 1977.

⁶⁰ See Hermann Mierecker, Die Unterstützung des USA-Imperialismus für die Putschpläne der italienischen Neofaschisten, in: *Militärwesen*, 2/1977, p. 26 ff.

⁶¹ See *Neues Deutschland*, from January 12, 1977.

⁶² Quoted from Karin Priester, *Der italienische Faschismus. Economic and ideological foundations*, Cologne 1972, p. 7.

⁶³ See *Frankfurter Rundschau*, from June 7, 1972.

good what must be done ... We prefer bloody bombs to bloodless jokes. From now on, anyone who seriously wants to practice anti-communism must stand outside the system and against the regime."⁶⁴

The example of Italian neo-fascism also illustrates how the "strategy of tension" is combined by the MSI with the attempt to make its own terrorist actions appear as acts of the "left" and to denigrate the policies of the Italian Communist Party.⁶⁵ Immediately after the attack on the Brenner Express, Almirante announced that it had been carried out by "red terrorists". However, the key witness he named was bribed, as was quickly revealed. He had been paid one million lire and a further ten million had been promised.⁶⁶

It is also demonstrable that the neo-fascists have channelled their own supporters primarily into radical left-wing organizations. At the University of Rome, for example, a group appeared as a "Nazi-Maoist movement" and propagated the slogans "Hitler and Mao united in common struggle" and

"Long live the fascist dictatorship of the proletariat".⁶⁷ Spectacular actions of a neo- and pro-fascist nature were launched in particular by the "Red Brigades", who kidnapped and murdered Aldo Moro, the leader of the Christian Democratic Party, in the spring of 1978.

These forces not only support the politics of conservative-authoritarian forces, but also the general efforts of imperialist ideologues to use historically discredited fascism in the interests of their anti-communism and anti-Sovietism by indiscriminately defaming Trotskyist-adventurous groups and genuinely revolutionary forces with the label "left-wing fascist".

The extreme reactionary organizations are as diverse as the manifestations of contemporary fascism. According to a Soviet social scientist, they are active in around 60 countries in the imperialist part of the world.⁶⁸ This is an objective fact that cannot be trivialized or denied. Nevertheless, bourgeois ideologues repeatedly attempt to do so, in particular by questioning the concept of fascism. Using strange criteria⁶⁹, they compare contemporary fascism exclusively with the regimes in Italy under Mussolini and in the "Third Reich" in order to conclude that the "epoch of fascism" ended in 1945 and therefore there can no longer be any [228] fascism today. While some bourgeois historians try to protect this argument by claiming that German fascism can only be understood as a "fascist era". "Hitlerism", others point to the example of the National Fascist Party in Italy and the NSDAP in Germany, which were mass organizations. The smaller size and appeal of today's fascist organizations is cited as evidence for the thesis that there can *only* be "police and military dictatorships", but no longer fascism.

The communist parties of many countries oppose such views. They refer, among other things, to the fundamental analyses of fascism by the VII World Congress of the Communist International and to Georgi Dimitroff, who declared that fascism is not primarily the result of a political and socialist revolution.

⁶⁴ Quoted from Hermann Mierecker, Die Verschwörungen der Movimento Sociale Italiano - die neofaschistische Gefahr in Italien, Part 2, in: Militärwesen, 1/1974, p. 39.

⁶⁵ In this context, Mierecker even speaks of the "new edition of the Hitler-fascist Reichstag fire strategy" (Mierecker, Die Unterstützung, p. 31).

⁶⁶ Mierecker, The Conspiracies, p. 39.

⁶⁷ See Neues Deutschland, from August 14, 1974.

⁶⁸ See G. Filatov, Questions of the History of Fascism and the Present, in: Sowjetwissenschaft. Gesellschafts- wiss. Contributions, 5/1977, p. 472.

⁶⁹ Such criteria are primarily used by representatives of the anti-communist doctrine of totalitarianism for a specific purpose. Among others, Nolte also speaks of six so-called "fundamental characteristics" of fascism, by which he means: Anti-Marxism, anti-liberalism, leader principle, party army, tendentious anti-conservatism and claim to totality (see Ernst Nolte, Die faschistischen Bewegungen. Die Krise des liberalen Systems und die Entwicklung der Faschismen, Munich 1966, p. 315).

It is defined by the presence or absence of a mass party, but by its class character and by the replacement of the state form of bourgeois democracy by open terrorist dictatorship.⁷⁰

In his "Thoughts on Fascism in Contemporary Latin America", Rodney Arismendi, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Uruguay, emphasized that the characterization of various systems of rule in South America as fascist dictatorships was "not a purely verbal or emotional" occasion.⁷¹ The existence of a mass party is not one of the criteria of fascism, but embodies national and historically concrete characteristics. The statement by some theorists that one can only speak of fascism if the existence of a corresponding mass party is proven at the same time is - as Arismendi explained - "dogmatic, since it requires that a historical event with the same content be repeated in the same forms".⁷²

In the present, the extraordinarily great diversity proves to be an essential characteristic of fascist forces within the framework of organized right-wing extremism. Compared to the first period of the general crisis of capitalism, there are undoubtedly fewer organizations that can be described as political parties in the usual sense. It was the tactic of the fascists to organize themselves in illegal groups after 1945 and to create "occasional parties" "whose democratic façade could be used by the underground organizations".⁷³ Where the fascists were able to organize themselves directly in party politics, they did not have a mass following - with the exception of the MSI and a few others. In contrast, those organizations in which conservative-authoritarian and fascist forces of right-wing extremism have united have a greater influence. The former generally distance themselves, albeit more superficially, from an open commitment to fascism. Associations that claim not to pursue any political goals and mostly focus on special tasks, such as the fight against fascism, also have a certain mass base.

z. e.g. the collection and "support" of former military personnel. Most right-wing extremist-fascist organizations are small circles and action groups that often change their names and structures. They concentrate on the preparation and implementation of terrorist actions and work closely with the imperialist secret service headquarters and, to a growing extent, with the criminal underworld.

Obviously, important processes of concentration and the collection of the organizationally fragmented potential of these forces are currently taking place. At present, efforts to achieve the goal through agreements, understandings and compromises between the most diverse groups are predominant. While the National Front seems to have established itself as the dominant organization in Great Britain, it is not yet clear in Germany whether the concentration process will have an effect and, if so, which organization will benefit from it. At present, the picture is dominated by the merging, regrouping and reshaping of the fascist forces, which are linked to the adaptation of the "traditionalist" groups, i.e. those oriented towards a simple continuation of the model of the 1920s and 1930s, to the new conditions of existence of imperialism. Most of the legal political organizations still present themselves as "moderate", they do not want to be "into the brown corner" and are looking for new forms of cooperation with the conservative parties.⁷⁴ In general, however, all organizations of the extreme reactionary forces of imperialism are trying to make full use of the possibilities available to them by means of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, militaristic adventurism and anti-relaxation policies, social demagoguery and, above all, terrorist actions.

⁷⁰ VII Congress of the Communist International. Papers and Resolutions, Berlin 1975, p. 93 ff.

⁷¹ Rodney Arismendi, Some Thoughts on Fascism in Latin America Today, in: *Einheit*, 2/1977, p. 215.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁷³ *die tat*, from March 24, 1978, p. 16.

⁷⁴ See A. Galkin, *Sovremennyy fašizm: ego istoki i charakter*, in: *Meždunarodnaja žizn'*, 9/1974.

d) International activities of neo-fascism

Finally, *fifthly*, fascism and neo-fascism can be found in an international form. Here, however, fascism has taken on an extraordinarily complicated form that is difficult to elucidate in detail. Many actions of the neo-fascists - including the establishment of fascist dictatorships - are the work or at least strongly influenced by the major secret services, especially the American CIA, by the multinational monopolies and by international organizations of the imperialist world such as the NATO High Command. It has been rightly claimed that the fascist danger is not so much in the remnants of the old fascism and not even in the new fascist gangs: "The growing danger is conjured up by a connection between the gangs and the imperialist world centers, the secret services, the NATO high command, the whole apparatus."⁷⁵

Unlike in the first period of the general crisis of capitalism, the extremely reactionary organizations are uniting in secret but relatively stable international associations. In the 1950s, the "Black International" was formed.⁷⁶ In 1951, its most extreme forces created the "European New Order" (NOE), which is currently coming to the fore again and is attempting to coordinate the activities of the various subversive centers. It is based in Lausanne and its founder and secretary is the Swiss fascist and former SS man Guy Gaston Amandruz. [230] The "New Order" relies on affiliated groups in Italy - where it has achieved the greatest influence so far - France, Belgium, Austria and several other countries. Several congresses are said to have taken place in the meantime.⁷⁷ Around 600 to 1000 fascists met in Munich during the Olympic Games on 16 and 17 September 1972, organized by the fascist magazines "Mut" and "Nation Europa", which are legally published in West Germany. This largest fascist meeting of the post-war period, at which 40 groups from Italy, among others, were represented, concentrated on questions of terrorizing Italy as the "weakest link" of the EEC.⁷⁸

The Spanish Circle of Friends of Europe (CEDADE) also plays a major role on the international fascist scene. In 1962, the English fascist Colin Jordan, who was one of the leaders of the "Black International" and had already made a name for himself before 1945, founded the "World Union of National Socialists (WUNS), which has established bases in France, Belgium, Germany, the USA, Australia, Argentina and Chile. It worked closely with the Chilean secret police and the "Anti-Communist Alliance of Argentina" (AAA).⁷⁹ In mid-July 1976, a meeting of representatives of fascist organizations from 15 countries took place in Barcelona. There is every indication that on this occasion the "Black International" was re-established operationally and links with the Argentine AAA and the Brazilian "death squads" were strengthened. "From now on, this gives rise to fears of a new edition of right-wing terror at European level," wrote the anti-fascist weekly newspaper of the FRG, "die tat".⁸⁰ The numerous coordinated actions by neo-fascist forces in Italy and other countries over the last few years and months fully confirm this fear.

Although the majority of the monopoly bourgeoisie does not identify with the current fascist organizations and advocates the positions of the so-called rose-and-sword philosophy⁸¹, the regimes and organizations of contemporary fascism enjoy great material support,

⁷⁵ I. Trofimowa, Die Verschwörung der Reaktion in Italien, in: Neue Zeit, 13/1971, p. 21.

⁷⁶ See Ernst Genri, Černý Internacional, in: Literární a časopis, 33/1973, p. 14.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ See Volkswacht, dated September 4, 1974, which quotes an article "In Hitler's beer cellars" from the Italian weekly newspaper "Epoca".

⁷⁹ See the tat, dated January 28, 1977.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Head of the Directorate-General for Competition in the (Western) European Commission, Schlieder explained this "mission statement" as follows: „... the entrepreneur of our day *needs* a *rose and sword philosophy*: the rose for the commitment to social commitment and social innovation, the sword for the resolute defense of the legal order

ideological and legal support. Above all, every kind of dismantling of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, every step towards further curtailment of social achievements and political freedoms, every "trend reversal" and swing to the right serves them. Such steps, which as a rule are not fascist in themselves, objectively favor the tendencies towards fascism inherent in imperialism. In their final result,⁸² [231] the existing forms of monopoly bourgeois exercise of power can be replaced by reactionary-terrorist and fascist ones. The methods and instruments of violent suppression of all socialist and democratic forces are always ready to be used preventively. The precautionary expansion and perfection of a terrorist apparatus as well as fascist manifestations in the politics and ideology of state-monopoly capitalism are also today among the preconditions for flexible variants of imperialist rule.

The reality of the danger of fascism already begins where reactionary modifications of imperialist rule are gradually made to the detriment of the working class and the toiling masses, not only where it has re-established itself as a form of rule, as in Pinochet's Chile, or where it has formed itself in parties and large mass organizations. It can already be seen in the toleration and promotion of the many small right-wing extremist organizations. It can also be felt in the distorted use of parliamentary methods, in their partial abolition and in their brutal anti-communist reversal into the opposite of bourgeois-democratic principles of law and order. The reality of the danger of fascism should therefore not be seen solely in the existence of large right-wing extremist mass parties, nor only where the "latent fascist potential of large sections of the population"⁸³, i.e. a fascist mass base, can be mobilized in certain situations. Although its possibilities for influencing the political masses are more limited than in previous decades, they are not yet exhausted. Similar to the thesis that fascism is a dictatorship of the middle class or the lumpenproletariat of the lumpenproletariat, and by the assertion that fascism is a completely independent social force that has nothing to do with monopoly capital and at most forms an "alliance" with parts of the big bourgeoisie under certain conditions, the overemphasis on the party and organizational political factor as a criterion for characterizing fascism also negates its class nature and - more importantly - disorients the anti-fascist struggle, which can only correspond to the laws of historical development as an anti-imperialist struggle and lead to the victory of the forces of peace and social and societal progress.

In their anti-imperialist strategy and tactics, the revolutionary workers' movement and its allies rightly assume that under the changed balance of forces in favor of socialism against imperialism, fascism, which has suffered its greatest defeats especially in Europe, can be prevented from raising its head again,⁸⁴ but at the same time it devotes the greatest attention to the struggle against right-wing extremist and fascist tendencies and activities. It warns against the striving for a fascization of social and political life resulting from imperialism and takes into account the possibility of sudden changes in the ruling methods of monopoly capital. The supporters of socialism, peace and historical progress mobilize the potential anti-fascist forces in all classes and strata and seek - with growing success - to form political alliances and broad popular movements against fascism. [232]

and the principles of the market economy" (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, November 21, 1975, quoted from Lilo Schneider, *Ideologische Konzepte des Monopolkapitals in der Krise und die Aktionseinheit der Arbeiterklasse in: Marxistische Blätter*, 4/1976, p. 40).

⁸² In this context, it is always important to emphasize that this is only a possible, not an inevitable and unavoidable development.

⁸³ Iring Fetscher, *Ist die Epoche des Faschismus beendet?*, in: *Ist die Epoche des Faschismus beendet?*, ed. by Detlef Horster and Marios Nikolinakos, Frankfurt a. M. 1971, p. 64.

⁸⁴ See Galkin, *Fascism suffers defeats*, p. 1616.

4. List of the most important right-wing extremist and neo-fascist organizations that have emerged since 1945

Argentina

- Anti-Communist Alliance of Argentina
- National Socialist Front

Belgium

- Europe Party
- Flemish People's Union

Bolivia

- Socialist Falange

Brazil

- Anti-Communist Brazilian Alliance
- Society for the defense of tradition, family and property
- Death Squad (Escadrao Muerto)

Federal Republic of Germany

- Eagle Youth
- Aktion Deutscher Sozialismus - German Working Group of National Revolutionary Movements
- Action Oder Neisse (AKON)
- Action Front of National Socialists
- Action Community National Europe (ANE)
- Action Group for Democratic Reorganization
- Anti-Bolshevik bloc of nations
- Anti-communist battle group Horst Wessel
- Working group of reservist, soldier and traditional associations (ARST)
- Working Group for Life Studies, emerged from: Bund für Gotterkenntnis, Weltanschauungsgemeinschaft Mathilde Ludendorff e. V.
- Working Group of People's Associations (AVV)
- Bund Heimattreuer Jugend (BHJ)
- Association of displaced persons
- German-Chilean circle of friends
- German citizens' initiative
- German People's Front (DV)
- German People's Union (DVU)
- German bloc (DBI)
- German Circle of Friends
- German Cultural Work of European Territory
- German People's Association (DVG)
- European Federalist Party (EFP)
- Liberal Council
- Gau Berlin of the NSDAP
- Community of East German Landowners (GOG)
- All-German Circle of Friends [233]
- Society for free journalism
- Mutual Aid Association of Soldiers of the Former Waffen-SS (HIAG)
- Southern Africa Aid Committee

- Young German Bund (JB)
- Young National Democrats (JN)
- Combat League of German Soldiers (KDS)
- Freedom League for Rudolf Hess
- Werewolf battle group for a Greater Germany
- National Democratic Party of Germany (KPD)
- Nation Europe Friends
- National Forum of the People's Socialist Movement in Germany
- National Socialist German Workers' Party - foreign organization (or organizational structure)
- National Socialist Battle Group Greater Germany
- New National Europe (NNE)
- Emergency Administration of the German East (NDO)
- Party of Labor
- Political Information Club
- SA-Sturm Hamburg, formed from: Hansa leisure club
- Solidarity movement
- Stahlhelm - Fighting League for Europe
- Independent Workers' Party (UAP)
- German National Assembly Association (VDNV)
- Association of forces loyal to the constitution (VVK)
- Volksbund Deutscher Ring
- Hoffmann military sports group
- Werewolf group Saar Palatinate
- Viking Youth (WJ)
- Witikobund

Chile

- Patria y Libertad

Finland

- Patriotic Popular Front

France

- Action Française
- French National Socialist Party
- Jeunesse d'Action Européenne
- Peiper Group
- Party of New Forces (Parti de forces nouvelles, PFN), formed from: New Order (Ordre Nouveau)

Greece

- Movement Fourth of August
- National People's Party [234]
- New Order (Nea Taxis)
- Bird Phoenix Movement

Great Britain

- British League for European Freedom
- British Movement
- Column 88

- Monday Club
- National Association for Freedom
- National Front
- National Party of Great Britain
- Union Committee
- Association of British Military Volunteers
- Young National Front

Guatemala

- Anti-Communist Secret Army (Ejercito Secreto Antikomunista, ESA)
- Mano blanco (White hand)
- New Anti-Communist Organization (NOA)
- Organized National Anti-Communist Movement (MANO)

Haiti

- Leopard Corps
- Tontons macoutes

India

- National Self-Help Union (Rashtriya Swayamoserak Sangh)
- Jana Sangh Party

Italy

- Armed Revolutionary Core
- Fronte Antibolscevico Italiano (FAI)
- Fronte Antibolscevico Rivoluzionario (FAR)
- Secret Anti-Communist Armed Forces (Esercito Clandestina Anticomunista, ECA)
- Italian Social Movement (Movimento Sociale Italiano, MSI)
- Mussolini Combat Unit (Squadre d'Azione Mussolini, SAM)
- Legion Europe
- National avant-garde
- National Liberation Front
- National Front
- National European Fighters
- National Socialist Order
- National Socialist Union
- New phoenix
- Avengers of Italy
- Revolutionary Action Movement (MAR)
- Red Brigades
- Black Order (Ordine Nero), were made up of: New Order (Ordine Nuovo)
- Rose of the Wind (Rosa dei Venti) [235]

Japan

- Youth squad for the defense of the state (Kokubo seinentai)
- League of the Blue Storm or Summer Storm Society (Sairankai)
- Patriotic Party of Greater Japan (Dainippon aikokuto)
- Sun flag (Hinomaru)

Colombia

- Fatherland and Order (Patria y Orden)

Lebanon

- Guardian of the cedar
- Lebanese Phalangist Party (Kataeb)

Northern Ireland

- Ulster Workers' Council
- Democratic Unionist Party
- Ulster Service Corps (USC)
- United Unionist Action Council (UUAC)
- Union of Ulster (UDA)

Norway

- Norsh Front

Austria

- Action New Rights (ANR)
- Free Corps Europe
- People's Conscious Workers' Party
- People's Socialist Movement

Portugal

- Liberation Front of the Azores (FLA)
- Umbrella organization of African displaced persons
- Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Portugal (MDLP)
- The chain (catena)
- Committee for the Defense of Liberty (CDL)
- Operational Command for the Defense of Western Civilization (CODECO)
- Party of the Portuguese Alliance (PAP)
- Portuguese Liberation Army (ELP)
- Independent Movement for National Reconstruction (MIRN)
- Viriatos (Association of former fighters against democratic Spain)

Puerto Rico (USA)

- Anti-communist front

Republic of South Africa

- Broederbond
- Angel of hell

Sweden

- National Association of Sweden [236]

Switzerland

- European reorganization (ESO)
- National action
- Republican movement

Spain

- Apostolic Anti-Communist Alliance
- Association of Veterans of the Civil War
- Bunker

- Christ the King Fighters (Guerilleros de Christo Rey)
- Comución Tradicionalista
- Frente Anticomunista Español
- Adolf Hitler Commando
- Command for the fight against Marxism
- National Brotherhood of the Garde Francos
- Spanish National Union
- New Force (Fuerza Nueva)
- People's Alliance

Thailand

- Anti-communist front
- Nawapol (Nations around the world seek the peace of love)
- Red buffalo (Krating Daeng)
- Association for the Protection of the Thai Nation

Turkey

- Gray wolves
- Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetci Hareket Partisi, MHP)

USA

- Americans for Constitutional Action
- American Security Council
- Christian Anti-Communism Crusade
- Conservative Society of America
- John Birch Society
- Ku Klux Klan
- National Socialist Liberation Front
- National Socialist Party of America
- National Socialist White People's Party

International fascist organizations

- European New Order (NOE)
- Black International
- World Union of National Socialists
- Circle of the Friends of Europe (CEDADE)

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Eberhard Hackethal: Fascism in Latin America

Fascism, the barbaric expression of imperialism's inherent tendency towards "reaction across the board"¹, is closely linked to the development and intensification of the general crisis of capitalism. It arises again and again as a result of various right-wing extremist, anti-democratic and above all anti-communist currents and thus signifies both the extreme aggressiveness and dangerousness of imperialism as well as its inability to maintain its system of profit maximization, indeed the system of exploitation itself, with the conventional means of the political organization of capitalism. It is, as the Communist International has already formulated it, "both an offensive and a defensive measure of capital"². As long as the instruments of parliamentary democracy and state-monopoly regulation are sufficient to secure the foundations of imperialist rule, the permanently existing fascist currents generally remain in the background and live out their existence as imperialism's reserve for crisis situations. However, as soon as an acute crisis of that rule arises, a revival, sometimes even an explosive development of fascist currents can always be observed. This is primarily an expression of the offensive of monopoly capital against anti-imperialist forces, especially in a situation in which broad masses of the people are politically activated and threaten to slip away from the apparatus of traditional manipulation.

To put it simply, one can say that fascism reared its head in two different social situations. Firstly, in those developed capitalist countries where the working class, in alliance with other strata, was strong enough to create an alternative to the crisis of imperialism (Germany, Italy, France, Spain in the 1930s), and secondly, where imperialism was only able to safeguard its interests through the mediation of a dependent and backward capitalism and therefore found itself particularly quickly in crisis situations that threatened the system (Hungary, Poland, the Baltic countries, at the same time). These two basic forms, known as

"fascism of developed countries of capitalism" and as "fascism of dependent and backward capitalism", still exist today in the most diverse forms as ideological currents, political organizations, political-economic concepts of monopoly groups and governments and finally as open terrorist dictatorship.

At present, a simultaneous process of the collapse of traditional fascist dictatorships in Europe, the reactivation of fascist currents in the imperialist countries³ and the establishment of fascist regimes in the so-called "peripheral" zones of the imperialist system, especially in Latin America, can be observed.

The latter phenomenon is undoubtedly due to the fact that "whenever there is a real danger to the rule of monopoly capital and its political currents, ... imperialism is ready for anything, renouncing even the slightest semblance of democracy".⁴

This phenomenon has led to lively discussions in both the scientific-theoretical and practical-political spheres. Opinions range from the denial of the fascist character of terrorist regimes in Latin America⁵ to a fatalistic conception of the

¹ V. I. Lenin, Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 22, Berlin 1960, p. 292.

² Quoted from Erwin Lewin, Zur Faschismus-Analyse durch die Kommunistische Internationale (1922-33), in: BzG, 1/1970, S. 55.

³ See Manfred Weißbecker, Wesen und Erscheinungsformen des gegenwärtigen Faschismus, in: IPW-Berichte, 8/1975, p. 36 ff.

⁴ XXV Party Congress of the CPSU. Accountability Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the next tasks of the party in domestic and foreign policy, Berlin 1976, p. 38.

⁵ Several ultra-left organizations in Latin America, such as the Chilean MIR, refuse to apply the concept of fascism to the dictatorships of Chile, Uruguay or Brazil. The background to these theoretically unsupported positions lies in the view that the task of the day is not a broad anti-fascist alliance, but the formation of forces for the socialist revolution in Latin America (see MIR - Chile-Dokumentation, June 1977, p. 3 ff.).

inevitable "fascization" under the conditions of the intensification of the general crisis⁶. Basically, all the questions that had already played a role in the debates of the 1920s and 1930s resurface in this discussion, albeit at a higher level and under different conditions.

At that time, alongside the rule of fascism in the developed capitalist countries, dictatorial regimes also emerged in less developed European countries in more or less direct imitation of German and Italian fascism, even to the point of outright dependency, particularly in south-eastern Europe. What seems new today is that such regimes are emerging while fascism is not in power in the main imperialist countries. This points to an expanded, internationalized function of fascism: With its help, the overall system of imperialism is now to be secured in terms of the global strategy directed by US imperialism.

Peripheral" fascism in no way contradicts the fact that the essential function of fascism is to safeguard the imperialist system of rule. On the contrary, it is precisely in those countries where national liberation is intertwined with the resolution of deep social contradictions and where the working class is already an effective force that a situation is most likely to arise in which imperialism strives for a fascist solution.⁷ These regions are obviously the "weakest links" of imperialism today.

[239] If this question is examined here using the example of Latin America, this is by no means intended to imply that the problem of dependent fascism does not also apply to other dependent and dependent countries, e.g. India, where the Communist Party has long warned of the growing fascist danger, or Thailand, which represents an important position for imperialism because of its special strategic value.⁸

It is obvious that this new manifestation of fascism cannot simply be equated with "traditional" big-power fascism. But it would be just as wrong to deny the fascist character of the regimes in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Paraguay, for example, because of the new features, because they do not fit into a preconceived "model" of fascism.⁹

It therefore seems necessary to re-examine some basic questions of the analysis of fascism on the basis of Latin American reality and to include them in the further discussion. This concerns the following problems in particular:

- Is the definition of the class system of fascism, as adopted by the Communist International, also valid for dependent and backward countries? Can we speak of fascism in the sense of this definition, especially in countries without developed domestic monopoly capital?¹⁰
- How can the use of fascist *methods* be distinguished from the open terrorist dictatorship of fascism as a form of rule by finance capital? As is well known, one of the most essential confusions (which is deliberately fueled by the bourgeois doctrine of totalitarianism) stems from the fact that fascism is only examined as a method of rule.¹¹

⁶ See, for example, A. A. Borén, El fascismo como categoria histórica, in: Revista Mexicana de Sociología, 2/1977, p. 481 ff.

⁷ See J. Soares, "Is there fascism in Latin America?", in: PFS, 12/1976.

⁸ See Der gegenwärtige Faschismus und die Realität seiner Gefahr, (in the following: Der gegenwärtige Faschismus), in: PFS, 4/1973, 5/1973.

⁹ Typical of this position is the work of J. F. Petras, La naturaleza de la junta chilena y las opciones de la oposición, in: Chile - America, 25-27/1976, p. 149 ff.

¹⁰ Rodney Arismendi raises this question in his article "Some Thoughts on Fascism in Latin America Today", in: Einheit, 2/1977, p. 215. There is no doubt that the emergence of fascist dictatorships in Latin America can only be definitively clarified by examining the changes in the socio-economic basis of dependent capitalism.

¹¹ See Ernst Gottschling, Die antikommunistische Totalitarismus-Doktrin unter dem Druck der Realitäten, in: IPW-Berichte, 10/1976, p. 2 ff.

- What is the relationship between the fascist political system and the mass base in developing countries? Quite a few theorists believe that the non-fascist character of the terrorist regimes in Latin America can be derived precisely from the lack of an organized mass base.¹²
- What modification does the relationship between internal and external factors undergo under the conditions of dependent capitalism? This is undoubtedly one of the most essential questions for analyzing the possibilities of the emergence of fascist regimes in backward and dependent countries.¹³

[240] All of this raises the question of how the fascist regimes in Latin America relate to the traditional military dictatorships, which were not uncommon in this region, on the one hand, and to the fascism of the 1920s and 1930s as the subject of the Communist International's analysis of fascism, on the other. If it is not posed undialectically and without taking into account the multiple transitions between the various forms of rule of the exploiting class, this is by no means an academic question of the formal classification of social processes into preconceived schemes, but rather a problem of historical research as well as a question of the elaboration of the strategy and tactics of the anti-imperialist and workers' movement in each country.

The facts speak for themselves in Latin America. In Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, regimes are in power that are obviously fascist in character. Other "traditional" dictatorships, such as in Paraguay and in some countries in Central America and the Caribbean (Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua), are undergoing a rapid evolution from the dictatorship of the traditional oligarchy to fascist rule. Increased attacks by right-wing extremist forces on more or less consistent and generally anti-imperialist national reformist movements in Jamaica, Guyana, Venezuela, Mexico, Panama and other countries are also evidence of the growing fascist threat.¹⁴

The attempt by international monopoly capital and in particular US imperialism to implement a policy of "roll back" in Latin America, the USA's No. 1 security zone¹⁵, this time in the immediate sphere of influence of the main power of imperialism, is unmistakable. For US imperialism, Latin America and the Caribbean are not just an arbitrary expansion area, but an integral part of the conditions of existence of the imperialist system. The effective collapse of world socialism into this hemisphere, hitherto clearly dominated by imperialism, through the successful Cuban revolution forced both US imperialism and the ruling classes of the Latin American countries closely associated with it into a counter-revolutionary reorientation.¹⁶

The new edition of Roosevelt's "New Deal" in Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress" policy towards the Latin American countries was combined with the aggression against Cuba and the destruction of the guerrilla movement in Latin America in the first half of the 1960s. However, the results of this combination of the policy of violence and reformist stabilization were extremely poor. In the mid-1960s, broad anti-imperialist-democratic movements emerged with significant participation of the organized working class in the main Latin American countries, i.e. Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Mexico.¹⁷ This created a situation in which international imperialism, mainly - but not exclusively - through the US

¹² In the current lively discussion of fascism in Latin America, there are repeated attempts to portray fascism as a petty-bourgeois mass movement in the service of foreign imperialism and not as an open terrorist dictatorship of finance capital (see, for example, the contributions by Ribeiro, Zéa, Zavaleta and Zemelman in: *El Facismo en América*, Mexico 1975).

¹³ See *Der gegenwärtige Faschismus*, in: PFS, 4/1973, 5/1973.

¹⁴ R. Arismendi, *Einige Gedanken zum Faschismus im heutigen Lateinamerika*, in: *Einheit*, 2/1977, p. 215.

¹⁵ K. S. Sergeev/W. G. Tkačenko, *Latinskaja Amerika - Bor'ba za nezavisimost'*, Moscow 1975, p. 31 ff.

¹⁶ See I Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, Berlin 1976, p. 256 ff.

¹⁷ See *Grundfragen des antiimperialistischen Kampfes der Völker Asiens, Afrikas und Lateinamerikas in der Gegenwart*, Teil II, Berlin 1974, p. 1173 ff.

monopolies, could neither protect vital interests with the methods of traditional military intervention (which had failed in Cuba in the face of the Soviet Union's resolute stance) nor with reformist appeasement programs.

The failure of the "Alliance for Progress", which was calculated to achieve capitalist stabilization, and the advance of socialist development in Cuba prompted imperialism to resort to fascist methods in its counter-offensive. The first expression of this new phase was the coup d'état in Brazil in 1964, which responded to João Goulart's very moderate national-democratic reform policy with a pre-emptive strike in the face of possible further developments.¹⁸ At the same time, the military clique around Onganía attempted to introduce a fascist development in Argentina in 1965.¹⁹ At the same time, in the Dominican Republic, the last attempt was made by US imperialism to suppress the anti-imperialist movement through open military intervention. This led to a deep crisis in the imperialist system of "Pan-Americanism", which continues to this day.²⁰

The election victory of Chilean Popular Unity in 1970 further intensified the conflict between revolution and counter-revolution on a continental scale. According to the Johnson Doctrine, a "second Cuba" was unacceptable to US imperialism. Because of the threat to imperialist rule in the immediate sphere of influence of the main imperialist power, fascism was chosen as a way out in order to avoid a "catastrophe" of international proportions. The same applies to Uruguay. One can therefore conclude:

- Fascism in Latin America emerged from an immediate existential crisis of the imperialist system, which is in sharpest contradiction to the vital interests of the Latin American peoples.
- The establishment of fascist dictatorships was linked to the defense against anti-imperialist revolutionary movements, and was therefore directly counter-revolutionary.
- The fascist variant of imperialist rule in Latin America is an expression of the impossibility of suppressing the revolutionary process in a number of Latin American countries by traditional democratic means, e.g. bourgeois reformism.²¹

However, it must be borne in mind that this variant of maintaining imperialist rule does not apply to all Latin American countries. It is therefore not very fruitful to describe the counter-revolutionary counter-actions in general terms as a fascization of the continent, but rather one must reckon with the maintenance of the *entire* range of instruments of imperialist policy, which is expressed in particular in the policy of US President Carter.²² It is obvious that the chances of success of a right-wing stabilization of Latin America depend on the strength of the anti-imperialist popular movement. That is why the defense against the fascist danger and all other reactionary efforts is the daily task of the anti-imperialist forces in Latin America today.

As early as September 1971, before the fall of the Allende government in Chile, the communist parties of a number of Latin American countries called for a joint fight against fascism.²³ These were the very parties in whose countries fascist regimes rule today or in which the fascist danger is present, namely the parties of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. The fascist coup in Chile in September 1973 was a turning point in the counter-revolutionary offensive of imperialism and initiated the broad mass struggle against the fascist aspirations of reaction. It had a strong impact on the

¹⁸ B. I. Koval', *Braziliya včera i segodnja*, Moscow 1975, p. 145 ff.

¹⁹ E. D. Stroganov, *Rabočee dvizhenie Argentiniy*, Moscow 1975, p. 100 ff.

²⁰ See Manfred Uschner, *Lateinamerika - Schauplatz revolutionärer Kämpfe*, Berlin 1975, p. 122 ff.

²¹ Rodney Arismendi, *Zu einigen aktuellen Fragen des antiimperialistischen Kampfes der Völker Lateinamerikas*, Berlin 1977, p. 6; M. Harnegger, *Fascismo y dependencia*, in: *Chile Informativo*, 123-124/1977, p. 4 ff.

²² One attempt to interpret the Carter administration's policy towards Latin America is the essay by T. Dos Santos, *La crisis imperialista y la política norte-americana*, Mexico 1977.

²³ *The anti-imperialist struggle in Latin America*. Kleines Nachschlagewerk, Berlin 1973, p. 383 f.

revolutionary forces in Latin America, which increasingly adopted a consistent anti-fascist orientation. In mid-1975, the communist parties of Latin America and the Caribbean declared: "The criminal coup d'état in Chile confirms how important it is to close the ranks of the defenders of democracy more quickly against any fascist threat."²⁴

The currently particularly acute confrontation between revolution and counter-revolution in Latin America requires a precise analysis of the nature, manifestations and perspectives of fascism as well as a corresponding strategy and tactics on the part of the anti-fascist forces.²⁵

Without falling into unjustified optimism or a conception of the automatic collapse of fascism in Latin America, Latin American fascism must certainly be regarded as unstable and extremely crisis-prone. This is due to the fact that in an unfavourable overall historical situation imperialism goes on the counter-revolutionary offensive and the objective and subjective foundations of capitalist stabilization in Latin America are constantly being called into question by the popular struggle as well as by the development of the international balance of power.

The unfavorable conditions under which fascism operates worldwide apply increasingly to Latin America. This has become particularly clear in the new quality that international solidarity with the people of Chile has reached.²⁶ It encompasses the broadest circles of democratic, anti-imperialist forces and has prevailed over all the maneuvers of the Chilean fascists and their helpers. It is of particular importance that this solidarity movement has not only become a comprehensive democratic mass movement, but has also found an effective expression in the bodies of the UN and in the majority of [243] international organizations.²⁷

In the socialist countries, solidarity with the anti-imperialist fighters of Chile, Uruguay, Brazil and other peoples oppressed or threatened by fascism has become a mass behavior in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. The IX Party Congress of the SED emphasized this in the report of the Central Committee with the following words: "From our party congress, we express our active and unrestricted solidarity with the communists and all anti-imperialist-democratic forces of Chile, Uruguay and all of Latin America."²⁸ The international condemnation of the fascist regimes of Latin America is an essential factor in the global struggle for détente and disarmament and considerably limits the possibilities for the expansion of fascist regimes.

But even apart from the isolation and instability of fascist regimes caused by the global change in the balance of power, it must be assumed that this form of terrorist dictatorship is particularly contradictory due to the dependence and backwardness of Latin American countries. The dependence of the Latin American financial oligarchy, which does not exclude independent development tendencies and contradictions to US imperialism, makes it difficult to stabilize it at home. As fascism in Latin America is primarily a representative of the interests of international monopoly capital, it is constantly in conflict with the USA.

²⁴ *horizont*, 30/1975, supplement.

²⁵ The literature published since the fascist coup in Chile on the problems of class struggle in Latin America is so extensive and diverse that it cannot be covered in this article. Reference should be made in particular to the works of Rodney Arismendi mentioned above.

²⁶ The report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Chile to the plenum of August 1977, for example, states: "This aid, this broad and deep movement of international solidarity with the anti-fascist cause of our people is also one of the most important events in the world today" (*Partido Comunista de Chile, Boletín Exterior*, 26/1977, p. 87).

²⁷ See *Chile - America*, 37-38/1977, p. 183 ff.

²⁸ IX Party Congress of the SED, Berlin, May 18-22, 1976 Report of the Central Committee of the SED to the IX Party Congress of the SED, Berlin 1976, p. 26.

between the internal conditions of its rule and the demands of the foreign imperialist exploiters. This considerably limits its ability to maneuver in the economic, political and social spheres. It is first and foremost a fascism in the interests of international monopoly capital, and its main function is to translate these interests into a nationalistically draped policy.²⁹

1. The class character of fascism

The facts prove that all fascist regimes in Latin America were created with the active involvement of the USA and other imperialist powers. The best known are the revelations about the interference of the US secret service CIA in Chile,³⁰ but this relationship of dependence is also clearly demonstrable in Brazil and Uruguay.³¹

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to see today's Latin American fascism one-sidedly as an import imposed by the USA or as a mere product of the neo-colonial policies of the [244] imperialist "metropolis".³² The emergence of fascist regimes is both an expression of the counter-offensive of international monopoly capital and the systemic safeguarding of US imperialism in its immediate sphere of influence as well as the change in the socio-economic conditions of the exploitative system in the Latin American countries themselves. Fascism in Latin America should not simply be ascribed the role of an instrument of foreign interests. The dependent character of fascism in Brazil, Chile or Uruguay does not exclude the possibility that these regimes are pursuing very specific class and group interests which, although inseparable from foreign imperialism in terms of their basis of existence, can reflect temporary contradictions between the various international monopoly groups as well as between the domestic and international financial oligarchy. This can be explained with a simple

This "dependency" cannot be explained and becomes particularly clear in the case of Brazil, where fascist methods of domination within the country go hand in hand with the intensification of the struggle for favorable external opportunities for the domestic monopolies, but are also closely linked to the struggle of the international monopolies for spheres of influence (e.g. in the nuclear energy issue).

In this respect, "dependent fascism" means nothing other than the contradictory fusion of the class interests of foreign monopoly capital with the domestic financial oligarchy under non-equal conditions. This process is taking place in Latin America under the conditions of a backward and deformed capitalism. The financial oligarchy of Latin America does not have the economic power to achieve even a temporary overcoming of the crisis of society in all areas. This is precisely why it must resort to absolute and perfected repression.³³ While traditional fascism still had quite extensive possibilities for mass corruption and state-monopoly regulation of the crisis phenomena at its disposal, this path to a fascist stabilization of the imperialist system is largely blocked in Latin America. This problem is exacerbated in the dependent and backward countries by the catastrophic effects of the intensification of the general crisis of capitalism. One of the functions of fascism in these countries is precisely to facilitate the shifting of the burden of the crisis onto the masses of the countries dominated by the imperialist leadership centers, especially the USA. However, this creates new contradictions within the fascist-ruled countries of Latin America.

²⁹ Thus Fazio writes: "Fascism is a specific form of rule of reaction. In a dependent country it is above all an expression of the rule of the monopoly capital of the imperialist metropolis, in our country of the US monopolies" (H. Fazio, *Die Kommunisten im Kampf um demokratische Einheit*, Berlin 1976, p. 249).

³⁰ See Chile - ein Schwarzbuch, Cologne 1974, p. 42 ff.

³¹ See L. C. Prestes, Brazil: Upswing of the Struggle of the Masses and Isolation of the Dictatorship, in: PFS, 3/1978, p. 382 ff.

³² This is clear in the work of G. Pierre-Charles, *Fascismo y crisis de la dominación imperialista*, in: *El fascismo en América*, p. 163 ff.; Poulantzas (N. Poulantzas, *Fascisme et dictature*, Paris 1974; *Las crisis de las dictaduras*, Mexico 1976) also does not seem to have fully grasped the dialectic of internal and external factors of dependent fascism. ³³ In other words, the use of the most brutal repression is a secondary characteristic of Latin American fascism, which derives from its particular conditions of existence, and does not constitute its essence, as social democratically oriented critics of fascism, for example, claim.

Finally, it should not be overlooked that the working class of Latin America and its leaders are not taking up the anti-fascist struggle without preconditions. In Chile, Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina in particular, they have a wealth of experience that stems from the defense against fascist attacks in the 1930s and 1940s.³⁴ In Chile, the achievements of the Unidad Popular are unforgettable, and in [245] Argentina the threat of "Pinochetism"³⁵ is an alarm signal for the masses. The forces opposing fascism today are much more conscious and better organized than during the "Cold War". The subjective factors of resistance make it difficult for the fascist regimes to stabilize themselves and force them to use both brutal repression and political manoeuvring.

On the other hand, the main imperialist power, the USA, is supporting the fascist regimes in Latin America with all its resources. This is the flip side of fascism in the backward and dependent countries. Some of its weaknesses can be compensated for, at least temporarily, by the direct influence of the US monopolies. In economic terms, this can be seen in the growing investments in Brazil and Chile,³⁶ politically in the backing of the USA for the fascist regimes in pan-American and other international cooperation and ideologically in the fact that Latin American fascism has the entire apparatus of US mass communication at its disposal.

Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that the fascist "solution" in Latin America also entails political and economic burdens for the strategy of US imperialism. It is therefore looking for ways out of the fascist dilemma of repressive stabilization and exacerbation of the crisis factors that are acceptable to imperialist interests. The policy of the US government, in particular the Carter administration, moves in the narrow space between the fundamental goal of maintaining imperialist dominance in Latin America by all means and the search for lasting solutions that fascism can no longer offer. This results in the contradictory nature of the US government's behaviour towards the fascist regimes in Latin America, which it supports, but which do not represent the only or even the most favourable variant of system stabilization for imperialism.

The dependence and backwardness of Latin American fascism thus determine its instability on the one hand, but on the other hand involve the overall potential of international imperialism in the struggle for the existence or non-existence of the fascist regimes. This internationalization of the class basis of fascism in Latin America seems to be the most remarkable feature of its current manifestations.

In some Latin American countries, an independent monopoly capital closely intertwined with international imperialism has developed.³⁷ At the same time, a process of "modernization" of the traditional agrarian oligarchy can be observed (e.g. in Uruguay and Argentina), which is increasingly allowing its profits to flow into the reproduction process of international finance capital.

At present, a new oligarchy is clearly emerging in Latin America, recruited from the fusion of modernized agrarian oligarchy, domestic monopoly bourgeoisie and international financial oligarchy. The multinational monopoly groups play a decisive role in this. They penetrate the most developed countries in Latin America through direct investments, subsidiaries and loans, where they find favorable conditions for the exploitation of capital, e.g. low labor costs and raw material[246] resources.³⁸ It is precisely because of these favorable conditions that the international monopolies are interested in maintaining the dependence and relative backwardness of these countries. At the same time, they need partners for this new form of dependency in these countries and find them in the aforementioned "new" oligarchy.

³⁴ See A. I. Garanin, *Narodnij front v Čili*, Moscow 1975; H. Ramírez Necochea, *El fascismo en la evolución política de Chile hasta 1970*, op. cit.

³⁵ A. Fava, *Character and Path of the Struggle for the Renewal of Democracy*, in: PFS, 11/1977, p. 1537 ff.

³⁶ Exact figures in: *Chile-Informativo*, 125/1977, p. 21 ff.

³⁷ Arismendi, *Some Thoughts on Fascism*, p. 215.

³⁸ See *Ekonomika stran Latinskoj Ameriki*, vol. 1, Moscow 1973, p. 25 ff.

In this way, a system of threefold exploitation is emerging in most Latin American countries: firstly, the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation typical of developing countries continue; secondly, internationally controlled industrialization is creating a new source of profit for domestic finance capital; and thirdly, a considerable proportion of the national income of Latin American countries is flowing to international monopoly capital through profit transfer.³⁹ However, this means nothing other than that the new phenomena in the development of capitalism in Latin America will further exacerbate the long-standing contradictions in this subcontinent⁴⁰ and give rise to new ones. The tendency to establish fascist dictatorships in a number of Latin American countries or to fascize existing dictatorial regimes is probably primarily due to the fact that under the specific conditions of Latin America⁴¹ a further advance of international monopoly capital as well as the development of domestic monopolies is not possible without intensifying the class struggle and calling into question the existing system of exploitation itself.

Fascism was already recognized as an international phenomenon by the Communist International. This applies today more than ever. Fascist dictatorships (Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Brazil) or influential fascist currents (Argentina) occur today in those countries of Latin America where the development of domestic monopoly capital, the "incorporation" of parts of the agrarian oligarchy into the imperialist system and the new form of integration of domestic and foreign monopolies are most pronounced.⁴² In this sense, the Communist International's definition of fascism certainly applies to the fascist regimes in Latin America.

In Mexico, too, we basically find all of the aforementioned symptoms, apart from the lesser weight of the agrarian oligarchy. Nevertheless, despite the existence of right-wing extremist and fascist currents and organizations⁴³, we cannot speak of an acute fascist danger there. This is obviously explained by the fact that the Mexican bourgeoisie, through an anti-feudal upheaval in the first decades of our century and in the period of President Cárdenas in the 1930s, has created a set of political instruments that is sufficiently elastic and adaptable to cushion the increasing social tensions for the time being⁴⁴ or to either suppress or manipulate the opposing forces, especially the labor movement, especially in the trade union sector. For the Mexican big bourgeoisie, fascism is a reserve that does not need to be mobilized now, but is there. The example of Mexico shows that economic and social development does not automatically lead to fascism.

An essential conclusion of the analysis of developments in Latin America is that fascism as a political trend and as a form of exercising power in dependent and backward countries is linked to the emergence of the combination of domestic financial oligarchy and internationalization of the monopolization process that has been characteristic of the last decade.

2. *Fascist mass base*

The class character of fascism in its current manifestations is indisputably the same as that already identified by the international labor movement in the 1920s and 1930s. In relation to Latin America, however, the question arises as to what extent the relationship between class character and social basis has changed under the conditions of the third stage of the general crisis of capitalism.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Arismendi, Current issues, p. 12.

⁴¹ Uschner, p. 20 ff.

⁴² See A. Van, L'America Latina all' interno del sistema imperialistico: colonizzazione e indipendenza, Milano 1977.

⁴³ The anti-imperialist struggle in Latin America, p. 234 f.

⁴⁴ J. J. Visgunova, Problemy edinstva demokratičeskich i antiimperialističeskich sil v Meksike, in: Latinskaja Amerika. Problemy edinstva antiimperialističeskich sil, vol. 2, Moscow 1974, p. 61 ff.

There is no doubt that every fascist dictatorship aims to gain a stable base among the masses of the people. Fascism not only wants to suppress the working class, but also to manipulate it in the interests of monopoly capital.⁴⁵ This is a necessary consequence of the system-stabilizing function of fascism. Fascist policy and propaganda is therefore aimed at gaining a mass base and depriving the anti-imperialist forces of their allies. This can be summed up in a simple formula: Suppression and manipulation of the workers' movement on the one hand, winning over the wavering intermediate strata on the other.⁴⁶

Attempts were made to apply this concept in Brazil as well as in Uruguay and Chile. The Brazilian military junta introduced a series of social improvements for precisely defined groups of skilled workers and - in the 1960s, i.e. during an economic boom - opened up certain social advancement opportunities for the petty bourgeoisie.⁴⁷

The Chilean military junta was also looking for ways to win over broader social strata. The national collective movement Movimiento de Unidad Nacional (MUN) was formed. However, both the Brazilian Alianza Renovadora Nacional (ARENA) and the Chilean fascists' attempts to organize remained in their infancy. In Uruguay and Bolivia, such attempts were not even made in view of their hopelessness.

The organized base of Latin American fascism is limited to the armed forces, secret services and smaller fascist groups. In view of this situation, the question arises as to whether fascism there is characterized by the fact that it attempts to mobilize the intermediate strata against the working class, and what role these strata play in the establishment of fascist regimes in Latin America in general. There was and is no lack of attempts to interpret fascism as a movement of the intermediate strata or at least as a temporary manipulation of petty-bourgeois forces against the labor movement. The example of Chile shows that the counter-revolutionary destruction of the natural alliance between the working class and other laboring classes paved the way for fascism.⁴⁸ It is also undisputed that Brazil's military dictatorship succeeded in the first years of its rule, under the conditions of an international economic upswing, not only in winning over large sections of the petty bourgeoisie, but also in promoting the development of the small and middle bourgeoisie.

But that is not the character of current fascism in Latin America; rather, fascist dictatorships are characterized by the fact that they *do not* succeed in gaining a broad social base. Incidentally, this is not a new phenomenon. Georgi Dimitroff already pointed out that in some countries of south-eastern Europe fascism emerges in a "peculiar" way: "The peculiarity consists above all in the fact that fascism in these countries, in contrast to fascism in Italy, for example, does not predominantly assert itself *from below*, through a mass movement, as a *form of state government*, but on the contrary *from above*."⁴⁹ There is no basis for deducing the existence of fascism from the degree of its mass influence or the existence of a fascist mass party, as is currently being done by the ultra-left in particular, but also by bourgeois sociology.

Today's fascism has fewer opportunities to influence the masses. It must be emphasized that although broad circles of the small and middle bourgeoisie are not actively fighting fascism, they are also not prepared to bow to its socio-economic concept.

The reasons for this lack of an organized fascist mass base, which some consider "atypical", lie in the dependent and backward development of capitalism in Latin America and the changed international balance of power. Under such conditions, what Dimitroff called "fascism from above" emerged.

⁴⁵ Palmiro Togliatti, *Lessons on Fascism*, Frankfurt a. M. 1973, p. 63 ff.

⁴⁶ On this problem, see Kurt Gossweiler, *Faschismus, Imperialismus und Kleinbürgertum*, in: *Jenaer Beiträge zur Parteigeschichte*, 37-38/1976, p. 95 ff.

⁴⁷ Koval', p. 158 ff.

⁴⁸ Partido Comunista de Chile - Informe al pleno de agosto 1977, p. 22 ff.

⁴⁹ Georgi Dimitroff, *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, Berlin 1958, p. 143.

The conditions for such a constellation of forces in Latin America are derived from a number of specific factors. Fascism must compete as a counter-revolutionary force against well-organized and experienced anti-imperialist forces (Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina) or even as a direct counter-revolutionary alternative against a revolutionary process already under way (Chile). The fascist forces therefore encounter popular masses largely involved in the political struggle with a relatively well-developed leadership of the working class.

Dependent fascism lacks the economic means to interest broader circles of the intermediate strata and certain sections of the working class in the fascist "development model", or in other words, to corrupt those strata of the population that could serve as a mass base for fascism. The outflow of national income as well as the lower rate of accumulation, exacerbated by the global crisis of the capitalist economic system, severely limit the field of social maneuvers of fascism in power and make it difficult to fulfill its essential function: to eliminate the workers' movement and win over [249] wavering strata. In contrast to the "traditional" fascism of the 1930s, Latin American fascism, with the exception of the initial phase of the military dictatorship in Brazil, is closely linked to the general and cyclical crisis phenomena of contemporary capitalism. This makes gaining a mass base in Latin American countries an almost insoluble problem, because these regimes cannot bring about any noticeable improvement in the already precarious living conditions of the masses.

Despite all the unfavorable conditions, fascism is of course constantly trying to gain a social base using ideological, economic and repressive means. The starting points lie partly in the pro-fascist movements and groups, such as the movement for the "preservation of tradition, family and property" (TFP) originating in Brazil, which found their counterparts in Chile in the fascist organizations "Fiducia" and "Patria y Libertad".⁵⁰ However, all attempts to create a broader pro-fascist or fascist movement failed to find any significant resonance. The fact that neither Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia nor Argentina succeeded in winning over significant sections of the working class is a particularly important fact.

In view of this situation, it seems necessary to point out the great importance of the alliance of the proletarian left forces with the more or less anti-fascist oriented forces of other classes and strata. The internal isolation of the fascist regimes in Latin America is possible to the extent that it is possible to win over the intermediate strata and the non-imperialist bourgeoisie to alternatives that correspond to the interests of the broad anti-fascist strata.⁵¹

However, the lack of an organized mass base for fascism in Latin America should not obscure the fact that today the possibilities of influencing the masses in the direction of anti-communism and anti-democratism have grown. Fascism in Latin America has a propaganda toolkit that is mainly controlled by the US monopolies. This has so far succeeded in neutralizing large sections of anti-imperialist forces or keeping them from direct anti-fascist struggle.

One of the tasks of fascism is precisely to win over potential revolutionary forces and thus withdraw them from the anti-imperialist struggle. This is why every fascist current, every fascist regime seeks to form an organized social base by eliminating the anti-imperialist vanguard, i.e. primarily the organized working class. Whether this tendency of fascism can temporarily prevail or not is determined by the concrete conditions of the counter-revolutionary attack. In Brazil, for example, it was possible until the beginning of the 1970s to neutralize the intermediate strata and in some cases even to win their active support. In Chile, at the stage of an advanced revolutionary process, this task was far more difficult and failed after only a few months of fascist rule, as was made clear by the attitude of the Catholic Church as a typical indicator. The

⁵⁰ See L. A. Kosyčev, "Patria i Libertad", in: *Latinskaja Amerika*, 3/1977, p. 100 ff.

⁵¹ Partido Comunista de Chile - Informe al pleno de agosto 1977, p. 72 ff.

In any case, fascism in Latin America seeks a social basis; in this respect, it is mass-oriented like all other fascist regimes in history.

Nevertheless, one of the most serious factors in the assessment of fascist dictatorships in Latin America remains the lack of an organized mass base. Can [250] the armed forces fill this vacuum, do they function as a "quasi-mass base" of fascism in Latin America?⁵² This is one of the most important questions when analyzing fascism in Latin America.

The role of the armed forces in Latin America has long been the subject of political debate and academic discussion.⁵³ Their role in the establishment of fascist regimes or in the formation of fascist groups has often led to a superficial anti-militarism, which Marxist-Leninists have always warned against. In many Latin American countries, the armed forces also played a relatively independent political role in the past. In the most diverse historical situations, they often represented the bearer of political power or the decisive force in changing the political balance of power. However, this fact, known as "interventionism"⁵⁴, should not lead us to reduce today's fascism in Latin America to a military issue, as a number of bourgeois or left-revolutionary authors have done.⁵⁵ This is countered by the fact that the political role of the armed forces in Latin America is extraordinarily differentiated and has recently ranged from national revolutionary to fascist positions.

In Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia and Chile, significant minorities in the armed forces always adopted anti-imperialist positions at the time of the military coups. The current situation in Argentina shows that this internal differentiation of the armed forces can also stop a fascist development. It remains undisputed, however, that in all cases the military is a decisive factor in the fascist movement and forms of rule. This is linked to a historical change in the function of the armed forces, which are transformed from a military instrument of the exploiting class into the bearer of political power.

This process, which cannot be examined in its entirety here, is undoubtedly due to the fact that the superstructure of dependent and backward capitalism in Latin America is in a deep crisis and the traditional methods and organs of exercising power are no longer able to stabilize the exploitative system. Under such conditions, the armed forces are often the only part of the apparatus of power that remains capable of action and is least affected by the anti-imperialist struggle, while other parts of the superstructure, such as the party system, state apparatus and parliamentary institutions, become largely incapable of action due to the influence of the popular struggle.⁵⁶

The relative independence of the armed forces in the capitalist apparatus of power and a certain seclusion of the military as an "institution" from political processes, which is deliberately promoted, as well as the peculiarities of the "vertical structure", i.e. the necessarily authoritarian command, must be taken into account, which allow the armed forces to be shielded to a certain extent from social changes and conflicts. Thus, there is no direct relationship between the change in the political balance of power and the behavior of the armed forces, although social processes are of course reflected in the armed forces.

In addition, the armed forces in Latin America are the sector of the capitalist power apparatus that is most strongly and intensively influenced by foreign imperialism.

⁵² See Harnecker, p. 20.

⁵³ The article by Manfred Kossok, Zur politischen Funktion der Armeen in Lateinamerika, in: ZfG, 2/1962, is still of orienting value. See also the discussion Wem dient die Armee, in: PFS, 4/1974.

⁵⁴ See E. Lieuwen, Arms and Politics in Latin America, New York 1960.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Die bewaffneten Technokraten - Militär und Politik in Lateinamerika, Hannover 1975.

⁵⁶ F. Mires, Die Militärs und die Macht, (West) Berlin 1975; see also Eberhard Hackethal, Die chilenischen Streitkräfte - historische Entwicklung und politische Funktion, in: Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika, 2/1974.

and directed.⁵⁷ In Chile, around two thirds of all senior officers have passed through US training institutions. The ratio is similar in other Latin American countries.⁵⁸

The example of Chile teaches us that it is a dangerous illusion to believe that revolutionary processes in the life of society will suddenly spread to the armed forces or that it is possible to permanently neutralize the military in the class struggle. Thus Volodya Teitelboim writes with regard to the armed and security forces: "The mistake was that the class character of these institutions was not duly taken into account; the possibility was ignored that these institutions would enter a stage of crisis and undergo erosion under the pressure of imperialism and reactionary circles at the same time as the transition of the middle strata into the camp of the opposition."⁵⁹ In Chile, this "erosion" meant the ousting of pro-gressive elements in the armed forces and the takeover of leadership by the fascist sector of the officer corps.

Profascist tendencies in the Latin American armed forces are no more new than anti-imperialist tendencies in parts of the military.⁶⁰ It depends on the degree of internal differentiation of the armed forces and the balance of power in the class struggle itself as to which tendency prevails. In Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Bolivia, it has been possible to achieve a "fascization" of the armed forces. In Argentina, there is currently an unstable balance between fascist and non-fascist groups in the armed forces.

In Latin America today, "fascism in power" presents itself as a military dictatorship. It has therefore often been referred to as "military fascism". This is due to the fact that, on the one hand, the military apparatus must replace the missing mass base of fascism in Latin America and that, on the other hand, the necessary total repression can only be carried out by the armed forces.

To a certain extent, the army serves as a substitute for the fascist mass movement and fascist parties that Latin America's dependent and backward capitalism was unable to produce.⁶¹ The military apparatus, the military hierarchy and the military ideology give fascism in Latin America its political and organizational structure, because the civilian political instruments of capitalism are too weak [252] to stabilize the system. However, it should not be overlooked that there is a close connection between the fascist currents in the "civilian sector" and the behavior of the military. Here, too, the example of Chile offers the clearest evidence. The fascist movements such as "Patria y Libertad" and "Fiducia" had the function of creating a situation of chaos and political insecurity in the country in order to induce the armed forces to intervene in a pro-fascist manner. These actions were aimed in particular at the intermediate strata, whose insecurity influenced the officer corps of the Chilean army, which mainly came from these strata.

The special role of the military in Latin American fascism is therefore an expression of the inability of dependent and backward capitalism to gain a stable mass base and not, following the traditions of military dictatorships in Latin America, a continent-specific variant of fascism. This fascism, based solely on the military and armed repression, is of course particularly unstable. As the processes of differentiation in the armed forces of Latin America continue and deepen even today, the stability of fascist regimes depends on the preservation of the political homogeneity of the armed forces and is therefore always characterized by internal

⁵⁷ For Brazil, see the detailed study by J. A. Antonov, *Braziliya - armija i politika*, Moscow 1973.

⁵⁸ See K. S. Tarasov, *SŠA i Latinskaja Amerika*, p. 136 ff.

⁵⁹ Volodia Teitelboim, *Prelude to victories to come*, in: PFS, 3/1974, p. 377.

⁶⁰ In this respect, there was never a political neutrality of the military in Latin America, but at best a temporary re-ralization.

⁶¹ Of course, this phenomenon is consistent with the tendency of fascism in general to militarize social life. Nevertheless, it is not correct to equate fascism and militarism, as André Glucksmann does in the anthology "Neuer Faschismus - Neue Demokratie" (New Fascism - New Democracy), (West) Berlin 1972. This position does not do justice to the differentiation in the armed forces of today's imperialism.

threatened by conflicts. This became particularly clear when open polemics broke out between General Pinochet and the other members of the military junta at the beginning of 1978 on the occasion of the so-called "referendum" in Chile.⁶² The example of Portugal shows that fascist regimes quickly collapse as soon as the armed forces no longer function as a homogeneous carrier of the exercise of power. This is why an anti-fascist military policy is of crucial importance for the victory over fascism.⁶³

3. Fascist ideology and propaganda

In addition to repression, the main goal of every fascist regime is to ideologically manipulate the masses in the interests of monopoly capital. There is no such thing as a fascist ideology in the sense of a self-contained world view; Palmiro Togliatti writes: "If we analyze this ideology, what do we find in it? In short: something of everything. It must therefore be regarded as an eclectic ideology."⁶⁴ But this observation should not lead us to underestimate the impact of fascist propaganda. Its anti-communist, nationalist and social-democratic content is aimed particularly at those circles that are looking for simple and quick solutions in an insecure social situation: the petty bourgeoisie and the most impoverished classes. Fascist ideology attempts to weld the heterogeneous class strata together on an ideological basis and in this sense is pragmatically oriented towards disguising the actual class character of fascism and presenting itself as class-neutral.

Particularly in the ideological field, despite all flexibility and adaptation to the respective circumstances, the correspondence of fascism in Latin America with [253] so-called "traditional fascism" is especially clear. This applies not only to the ideological roots of today's fascism in Latin America, which range from Mussolini's corporativism to Nazi-fascist geopolitics and clerical fascism in Spain,⁶⁵ but in particular to the basic features of fascist mass propaganda in today's Latin America, which is more or less pronounced in all capitalist Latin American countries. These are in particular:

- Anti-communism and anti-Sovietism as the basis of every fascist ideology,
- Anti-democratism as an ideological justification for dictatorship,
- Extreme nationalism and national demagoguery, the propagation of which is, however, made more difficult by the dependent character of Latin American fascism,
- Transfer of the norms of the military hierarchy to the whole of society under the guise of "order and security",
- Social demagoguery based on the idea of a "people's community" without class struggle.

Anti-communism is elevated to a myth by the fascist regimes, made the main goal and the main content of the dictatorships' mission statement. Thus Pinochet proclaimed on September 11, 1976: "Marxism is not simply an erroneous doctrine, as there have been many in history. No - Marxism is an inwardly perverse doctrine, and that means that everything that springs from it, however healthy it may appear, is imbued with the poison that flows from its roots."⁶⁶

This anti-communist mission statement, which is aimed at creating mass hysteria, is intended to justify the worst excesses of fascism, the constant violation of human rights.

⁶² See El Mercurio, from 28/29/12/1977.

⁶³ At its plenum in August 1977, the Communist Party of Chile developed a comprehensive and mature program for involving the military in the process of developing a new anti-fascist democracy; see Partido Comunista de Chile - Informe al pleno de agosto 1977, p. 68.

⁶⁴ Togliatti, p. 15.

⁶⁵ See Eberhard Hackethal, Fascism and Fascist Ideology in Latin America, in: Asia, Africa, Latin America, 4/1977, p. 646 ff.

⁶⁶ Quoted from J. Silva Solar, El integralismo católico-fascista en la ideología de la Junta Militar, in: Chile - América, 1/1975, Supplement, p. 11.

Nationalist propaganda is characteristic of fascist ideology, despite all its colorfulness. It is particularly pronounced in Brazil's efforts to achieve subcontinental hegemony and in the fomenting of border conflicts, in the disruption of relations with neighboring countries, as in the case of Chile.⁶⁷

However, this is in blatant contradiction to the actual function of dependent fascism, which is to create the most favorable conditions of exploitation for foreign monopoly capital. In the anti-communist sense, nationalism is converted into the "defence of civilization"; the preservation of "internal security" is elevated to the highest national duty. Under such conditions, the aggression inherent in fascism is directed first and foremost against its own people as an "internal war".⁶⁸

[254] In fact, the fascist coups in both Brazil and Chile were carried out as staff-led military operations using the entire army. However, the ideology of Latin American fascism has above all incorporated a new element - the global strategic, anti-communist doctrines of US foreign policy.⁶⁹

The described military character of fascism in Latin America entails a militarization of the entire social life, from the education system to labour legislation. The transfer of military-authoritarian structures to society, which is characteristic of fascism in general, took on a special character in the fascist dictatorships of Latin America.⁷⁰

The norms of military life were elevated to general rules of conduct and thus permitted any form of unlawful use of force. This was formalized in various so-called

"constitutional acts" of the dictatorships in Brazil, Uruguay and Chile. Thus, Chile's dictator Pinochet justified the total destruction of democratic institutions as follows: "The philosophical inspiration of such fundamental legal documents is clearly and simply that Chile has ceased to be an ideologically neutral state, as supported by philosophical liberalism, and has resolutely adopted a clear, firm and effective doctrine from which the legal foundations of Chilean institutionality spring and which cannot be detached from the existence of the state."⁷¹

This course, the modalities of which differ within the fascist power groupings and also from country to country, points to an essential characteristic of fascism that can serve as a criterion for distinguishing it from traditional military "caudillismo". Fascist regimes do not see themselves simply as upholders of the status quo, but as the bearers and implementers of a "new" social doctrine.

4. The political and economic system of fascism

The aim of fascism is the permanent stabilization of dependent and backward capitalism and the final elimination of the workers' movement as well as the destruction of all political institutions that give working people a certain degree of co-determination and influence over the political and economic situation.

⁶⁷ For example, the dispute over the shipping routes at the southern tip of the Americas between Chile and Argentina, the dispute over the use of the resources of the La Plata basin and the question of Bolivian access to the world's oceans have all contributed to fomenting nationalist movements in the southern cone of the Americas.

⁶⁸ This doctrine of "internal war" goes back to the "anti-subversive" orientation of the military in Latin America led by the USA in the 1960s. In the fascist dictatorships, however, the "internal war" has taken on a new quality in that military action is no longer directed against limited groups of guerrilla fighters, but is used as state policy against the mass of the population. This symptom of Latin American fascism is also most pronounced in Chile (see Kritika [254] ideologii neofašizma, Moscow 1976, p. 388 ff.; C. Almeyda, El problema militar en la experiencia de la Unidad Popular Chilena, in: Chile - América, 37-38/1977, p. 63 ff.).

⁶⁹ Ta rasov, p. 221 ff.

⁷⁰ For example, Análisis de la situación educacional y cultural durante el cuarto trimestre de en Chile, Berlin 1977 (Masch.).

⁷¹ El Mercurio, from 12.9.1976.

social processes. This goal, usually referred to in the current discussion as the "institutionalization" of fascism,⁷² has its roots in the history of ideas in Mussolini's corporatism, the Nazi "people's community" ideology and the French social demagoguery in Spain. The cornerstones of this policy are the omnipotence of the executive, as laid down, for example, in "Institutional Act No. 5" in Brazil in 1968, and the [255] elimination of political organizations, especially the bourgeois party system. The concrete manifestation of this policy in turn depends on the degree of threat to the system. While the Brazilian dictatorship could still afford a sham opposition - which, however, became a nuisance again - Chilean fascism, as an openly anti-democratic regime, was forced from the outset to stifle all possibilities of political alternatives, even from the circles of the bourgeoisie, e.g. the Christian Democrats.

The political system of Latin American fascism is very similar to "traditional fascism" in a whole range of manifestations. However, the inner relationship that exists here results less from historical roots than from the similar class basis and the function of fascism. In both cases, the aim was to replace the no longer functioning system of bourgeois democracy with a new form of political organization of society that was more effective for the exploiters. The forms chosen for this in Latin America are very diverse and range from arbitrarily appointed state councils (Chile) to sham elections (Brazil), which have no influence whatsoever on the actual power structure. Parallel to this - and this is also a general characteristic of fascism - new political bodies emerge that represent the interests of monopoly capital, above all state-monopoly organizations in the economic sector and secret services that are completely removed from public control. The secret services in particular play an increasingly important role in securing the fascist regimes and as the main sphere of influence of foreign imperialism.⁷³

In the final analysis, dependent fascism in Latin America is determined by the economic interests of foreign monopoly capital and its domestic allies. The economic policies of these regimes are therefore extremely contradictory. The function of dependent fascism as a representative of the interests of international monopoly capital prevents economic consolidation at home. Added to this are the profound effects of the current global crisis of imperialism.⁷⁴ While Brazilian fascism at the end of the 1960s still benefited from a certain upswing phase of imperialism and therefore achieved a temporary political stabilization, this is no longer possible for the fascist forces in Chile and Uruguay. Today, the economic policy of the fascist-ruled countries of Latin America (including Argentina) fluctuates between state monopolistic regulation and traditional economic liberalism.⁷⁵ Characteristic of dependent fascism is the opening of the domestic market to foreign monopoly capital, the favoring of foreign investments and the shifting of the burden of the crisis onto the working population.⁷⁶

This mixture of protectionism in the interests of the domestic monopoly groups and simultaneous surrender of the country's economy to international imperialism seems to be characteristic of Latin America's dependent fascism and at the same time causes its economic instability. However, it not only leads to the impoverishment of the masses, which is statistically verifiable in all the countries mentioned so far⁷⁷, but also to growing contradictions within the bourgeoisie, which are only very differentiated from the contradictory economic policies of the other countries.

⁷² Institucionalización: camino a la Casa Blanca, in: Chile-Informativo, 124/1977, p. 7 ff.

⁷³ See G. Selser, Chile para recordar, Buenos Aires 1974.

⁷⁴ See Secretaria Ejecutiva de la Unidad Popular. Documentos y Materiales Economicos, op. cit. 1977.

⁷⁵ This does not exclude projects for the "modernization" of the existing system and the alignment with capitalist, purely quantitatively conceived development policy. The economic program of the Brazilian military is typical of this, as is its failure (see Mires, p. 146 ff.; I. Soletto/K. Eßer/B. Moltmann, Die bewaffneten Technokraten, Hanover 1975, esp. p. 79 ff.).

⁷⁶ Rodney Arismendi's New Year's message, in: Desde Uruguay, op. cit. February 1978, p. 1.

⁷⁷ See e.g. Secretaria Ejecutiva de la Unidad Popular, p. 1 f.

of fascism. In Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, but also in Argentina, broad opposition groups of the local bourgeoisie are emerging today, which are turning against the economic policy of dependent fascism in the interests of their own striving for prosperity.⁷⁸

Today's fascism in Latin America, whether it appears as an ideological current, a political concept or a terrorist form of rule, can only be understood - to summarize - as an expression of decisive changes in the socio-economic basis of the system of exploitation in Latin America itself, in the international, continental and national relationship of class forces and in the simultaneous continuation of the dependent and backward path of capitalism in Latin America. Only from these factors can the criteria for differentiating between traditional dictatorships in Latin America and the historically recent phenomenon of "Fascism in power" in this region.

However, it must be taken into account that the fascist dictatorship develops over a wide range of transitional forms, mergers with traditional conservatism and authoritarian political concepts.⁷⁹ The principle developed by the Communist International of distinguishing between fascist currents and political movements and fascism in power still applies.⁸⁰ There is no doubt that the danger of fascism exists throughout the Latin American subcontinent. However, the extent to which this danger can become a political reality depends first and foremost on the strength of the anti-fascist forces and their core, the organized working class.⁸¹

Fascism in dependent and backward countries is, as shown, extremely unstable in terms of its socio-economic basis and the contradictory nature of its ideology and does not have the stabilizing factors that allowed Hitler's fascism or the Franco regime to remain in power for many years. On the contrary, Latin America's fascist dictatorships quickly exacerbate all the social contradictions they were supposed to resolve and lead to a confrontation between anti-fascist forces and the minimal fascist ruling class.

[257] The working class is forced into the sharpest opposition to the fascist dictatorship from the outset due to the multiplied exploitation and the dismantling of its social and political rights. Large sections of the intermediate strata, such as state employees, the intelligentsia and small businessmen, who were subject to strong economic and political pressure, also faced an uncertain future in view of the policy of "shrinking the economy". Finally, fascist rule led to an intensification of the contradictions within the big bourgeoisie. However, the opening of the country to foreign imperialist investment and the dictatorship of a few dominant monopolies are considerably restricting the movement of the very broad middle class of entrepreneurs in Latin America, in some cases even leading to their ruin.

The change in the attitude of the Chilean Christian Democratic Party and the Brazilian The shift of the "Movimiento Democrático Brasileiro" from benevolent toleration of the fascist dictatorship to anti-dictatorial (not always anti-fascist) positions can only be understood in the sense that large sections of the bourgeoisie no longer see their economic interests represented and secured by the fascist regimes. A sure indicator of this fact is the attitude of the leadership of the Catholic Church in Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina towards the fascist dictatorships and the fascist danger.⁸² The political stance of the church hierarchy was

⁷⁸ See the detailed discussion among Soviet Latin Americanists, especially in: *América Latina*, 2/1975, 5/1977.

⁷⁹ A. Galkin, *Fascism suffers defeats, the danger of right-wing radicalism remains*, in: *PFS*, 12/1974, p. 1609 ff.

⁸⁰ See Elfriede Lewerenz, *Die Analyse des Faschismus durch die Kommunistische Internationale*, Berlin 1975, p. 31 ff.

⁸¹ It is therefore necessary to oppose the fatalistic thesis of the "fascization" of Latin America, which is basically just a new edition of the "geographical fatalism" spread for decades by petty-bourgeois forces (see Arismendi, *Fragen des antiimperialistischen Kampfes*, p. 8 ff.).

⁸² See Eberhard Hackethal, *Kreuzweg Chile*, Berlin 1976; F. Correia, *La Chiesa e la dittatura in Brasile*, Milano 1977.

in Latin America has always been an expression of the interests of the bourgeoisie *as a class*. The current predominantly anti-fascist attitude of the Catholic Church underlines the fact that dependent and backward fascism is no longer able to represent the interests of this class. Certain Christian circles even go beyond the reformist aims of the official church and bring socialist orientations into the discussion about anti-fascist alternatives.⁸³

Fascism thus has an effect in the dependent and backward countries of Latin America that runs counter to its actual goal: Instead of achieving a stabilization of the international system of exploitation, it produces new objective factors of its instability. However, this does not mean that the fascist regimes collapse "automatically", so to speak, because of their internal contradictions.

The crisis of the fascist regimes in Latin America is obvious. However, the question arises as to what extent the very heterogeneous anti-fascist forces will succeed in using this crisis for a new upsurge of mass social struggle, or whether a "channeled" transition of the fascist dictatorship into a more or less authoritarian democracy will occur in the interests of the same forces, which are not afraid to support a brutal terrorist dictatorship when the system of exploitation is threatened.⁸⁴ A comparison with the situation in Spain and Greece in the 1970s suggests itself and is worthy of closer examination.

The most determined anti-fascist forces in Latin America, i.e. the organized working class, headed by the communist parties, have a clear tactical and strategic concept that follows the proven historical experience of the Communist International. They assume that the struggle against the fascist dictatorship not only demands the unification of all non-fascist forces in the civil and military sphere, but that the intensification of all social problems will also make possible a broad alliance that goes far beyond the forces oriented towards socialism. Thus the declaration of the Uruguayan Communist Party of December 1977 states: "We will make the greatest efforts to revive the actions of the 'Broad Front' at all levels by strengthening the unity of action with all forces opposed to the dictatorship and concretizing unity or agreement in common action on the basis of a minimum programme."⁸⁵

At its plenary meeting in August 1977, the Central Committee of the Chilean Communist Party adopted a comprehensive program of anti-fascist unity of action, which culminated in the statement: "We see the reunification of all democratic Chileans in a large, advancing social force as an opportunity to rebuild the country."⁸⁶

Of course, this does not mean that the fall of the fascist regimes in Latin America must necessarily lead to a revolutionary situation. The illusion of left revisionist forces that only socialism is possible after fascism has long been refuted by history. It is first and foremost a matter of creating the most favorable conditions of struggle for the gathering of those forces that can also open up a socialist future for the peoples of Latin America. That this process will be long and complicated is clear from an analysis of the objective and subjective conditions of this class struggle.

The communists of Chile, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay have developed concrete action programs for the anti-fascist struggle. Their starting point is the fact that fascism in Latin America is in contradiction to the interests of the broadest sections of the working people and parts of the bourgeoisie. In Argentina, the concept of the democratic offensive of all anti-fascist forces, whether of civilian or military provenance, is finding an increasing echo.

⁸³ This applies, for example, to the group of left-wing Christians already cited, who publish the bulletin "Chile - América" in Rome.

⁸⁴ See Poulantzas.

⁸⁵ Manifiesto del Partido Comunista del Uruguay, Montevideo, 30 de diciembre de 1977, n.d. (machine), p. 27.

⁸⁶ Partido Comunista de Chile, Boletín del exterior, op. cit. no. 26, p. 82.

In Latin America, the fascist threat is encountering an offensive and successful resistance that is increasingly taking on a mass character. The way in which fascism can be fought, contained and overthrown in Latin America, and with what historical perspectives, will of course depend on the strength of the opposing forces, primarily the organized labour movement.

[261]

Part II: Questions of fascist ideology

Joachim Petzold: The emergence of Nazi ideology

"Much of what was in our program at the time, or what I proclaimed in this hall eighteen years ago today, had already been thought of long before."¹ In itself it was surprising that Adolf Hitler, from whom these words originated, once confessed so openly that he himself had not stood at the cradle of the "National Socialist" ideology, let alone founded it. But since he was speaking to the "old fighters" in Munich's Hofbräuhaus, he could not easily ignore the fact that he had drawn on the ideas of others from the very beginning, since there were still many sitting in the hall on February 24, 1938 who were well aware of this or even rightly regarded themselves as the donors of ideas.

The emergence of fascist ideology in general and its Nazi variant in particular is directly linked to the transition of capitalism from free competition to imperialism and the onset of the general crisis of capitalism. It grew out of the efforts of the most reactionary and aggressive groups of the ruling class to prepare for the struggle for the imperialist redivision of the world and to counteract the impending downfall in the face of the incipient proletarian world revolution.²

Long before the First World War, the All-German Association - this ideological leadership center of the most reactionary and aggressive groups of the German monopoly capital -³ had already been concerned with the question of how the German people could be ideologically [262] prepared for the military conflict over the redivision of the world and prevented from fighting a revolutionary struggle against the existing capitalist social order. The chairman of this All-German Association, Councillor of Justice Heinrich Claß, summarized these considerations in his book "Wenn ich der Kaiser wär'" (If I were the Emperor), published in 1912 under the pseudonym Daniel Frymann, and brought them to the attention of a wide circle of readers.⁴

The political and ideological program of the Alldeutscher Verband contained in this publication reflected the fundamental interest of big business, which had entered its monopolistic stage of development and was striving to consolidate its domestic power and expand its power in foreign policy. In order to achieve both goals, Claß demanded a strong "leader" and, if necessary, the establishment of a dictatorship. He always remained aware that the revolutionary core of the working class was increasingly questioning the capitalist social order. Since even a policy of reform seemed questionable to him and the growth of opportunist influences in the workers' movement was of secondary importance, he was extremely worried by "the enormous increase in Social Democratic votes and the doubling of the party's power in the Reichstag".⁵

The first thing Claß demanded was therefore the liquidation of the workers' movement. Everything that turned against the existing state had to be ruthlessly suppressed. This did not only apply to an armed uprising, but also to "any newspaper founded without a party that appears to be socialist in the sense of being hostile to the state". A change to the electoral law is

¹ Quoted from Reichsleiter Philipp Bouhler in the foreword to A. Ciller, *Deutscher Sozialismus in den Sudetenländern und der Ostmark*, Hamburg 1939.

² The political aspects of the development of the Nazi movement in Germany are examined in detail by Kurt Gossweiler in his forthcoming book on the German ruling class and the NSDAP in Bavaria 1919-1923, to which this study owes much of its inspiration. The theoretical foundation of the fascist ideology in Germany is described in the 1978 book by Joachim Petzold, *Konservative Theoretiker des deutschen Faschismus. Jungkonservative Ideologen in der Weimarer Republik als geistige Wegbereiter der faschistischen Diktatur*. The study by Dirk Stegmann, *Zwischen Repression und Manipulation: Konservative Machteliten und Arbeiter- und Angestelltenbewegung 1910-1918. Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der DAP/NSDAP*, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, XII/1972, p. 351 ff. is very important for the question.

³ See Edgar Hartwig, *Alldeutscher Verband (ADV) 1891-1939*, in: *Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland*, edited by a collective of authors under the direction of Dieter Fricke, Vol. I, Leipzig 1968, p. 1 ff.; Jürgen Kuczynski, *Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Imperialismus*, Vol. II: *Propagandaorganisationen des Monopolkapitals*, Berlin 1950.

⁴ Daniel Frymann, *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär' - Politische Wahrheiten und Notwendigkeiten*, 1st edition, Leipzig 1912.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. VIII.

at any cost, including that of a coup d'état. Strikes should be ruthlessly suppressed. Anyone seeking to prevent people from working or standing on the picket line should be able to be "taken into *preventive detention*", even if they had not otherwise committed a criminal offense.⁶

All domestic repressive measures had to serve the second major goal of monopoly capital, which Claß outlined with the words "active foreign policy - let's just say aggressive" in order to "get us what we need, for good or ill: Land". He suggested that such conquests would be best combined with the expulsion of the indigenous population.⁷ As Claß did not dare to openly shake Bismarck's demand for good relations with Russia due to foreign policy considerations and internal differences of opinion, he specified south-eastern Europe as the main direction of expansion in his *Kaiserbuch*. When war with Russia finally broke out in 1914, Claß became one of the most ardent advocates of extensive and ruthless eastern annexations.

It is easy to see that from his all-German point of view, Claß formulated the two main goals that later guided German fascism. He also developed political methods of struggle which the fascists could also adopt and only had to adapt to the changed conditions of struggle. For example, Claß started from the principle that the "racial question" was "one of the most important" [263] and that the "Jewish question" had to be solved by the "'most radical' means".⁸ Although he always endeavored to defend the capitalist exploitative order without reservation, in his *Kaiserbuch* he contrasted the supposedly organically grown large companies Krupp, Blohm & Voss and Schichau with the large banks and department stores that were hostile to tradition.⁹ The Nazis demagogically transformed this into the alleged contrast between the "creative Aryan" and the merely "grubbing Jewish" capital.

Hitler therefore praised the All-German Association many times over.¹⁰ For his part, Claß returned the favor in 1925 in the 7th edition of his *Kaiserbuch* by recognizing the NSDAP as a new member of the Federation, "which grew in size through *Adolf Hitler's* effectiveness".¹¹ Nevertheless, bourgeois historiography on fascism has blurred these relationships or at least paid little attention to them. This is not surprising, as they reveal clear dependencies that contradict the repeatedly asserted independence of the fascist movement and also reveal embarrassing lines of continuity. Apart from the fact that the All-German Association remained much more attached to the conservative tradition and the Prussian-German Empire and - as Claß himself put it in 1914 - played the role of a "trailblazer" in many areas¹², two things in particular seem to point to a contrast between All-German and fascist aspirations.

The All-German Association, which was decidedly hostile to England, was said to be striving for good relations with Russia in the spirit of the Bismarck tradition. Only when the undesirable conflict with the Tsarist Empire occurred in 1914 would Claß have joined the demand for extensive annexations in the East raised by other parties. There was no mention of this in his *Kaiserbuch*. Hitler, on the other hand, had turned against "the foreign policy direction of our pre-war period" from the outset and "looked to the land in the East".¹³ Anyone who argues in this way is initially ignoring the impact of the social changes that had taken place in Russia. Before the First World War, the All-Germans had the Tsarist regime in mind, which some leading representatives saw as a natural ally of the Prussian-German Empire.

⁶ Ibid., p. 4, p. 67.

⁷ Ibid., p. 136 ff.

⁸ ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband, No. 95, p. 21 f.; Claß' statement at the meeting of the Alldeutscher Verband's Executive Committee in Berlin on July 4, 1914.

⁹ Frymann, p. 28, p. 62 f., p. 58 ff.

¹⁰ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Munich 1930, p. 133; ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband. No. 392, p. 134; Hopfen on August 10, 1920 to Claß about a conversation with Hitler; Alfred Kruck, *Geschichte des Alldeutschen Verbandes 1890-1939*, Wiesbaden 1954, p. 192.

¹¹ Frymann, 7th ed., Leipzig 1925, p. 215.

¹² ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband, No. 95, p. 23.

¹³ Hitler, p. 742.

appeared. After the First World War, the fascists were confronted with the world's first socialist state, which served as an example for the world revolutionary process of upheaval and provided support for the social and national liberation struggle in all countries. Destroying it therefore had to be the main foreign policy objective if the fascists wanted to fulfill their class mandate.

Moreover, Claß should not be judged solely by his statements in the Kaiserbuch. Even in it, he had indicated that his attitude towards Russia would change immediately "if the country, blessed with a constitution, allowed the enormous antagonisms of the various nationalities to break out and a break-[264]up into different states occurred"¹⁴. At the meeting of the Executive Committee of the All-German Association in Munich on April 19, 1913 - still many months before the start of the First World War - he declared in strict confidence: "Protection against the Slavic supremacy must be achieved by weakening Russia until it can no longer pose a threat to us. Russia already has 165 million inhabitants; anything that leads to the destruction of this colossus must be welcome to us ... Bismarck said that there were only two things: either very good or very bad relations with the Tsarist Empire. The former is out of the question today, so we are left with the latter. So we must work towards a struggle to finally secure Germanness from Slavdom and to promote centrifugal efforts in Russia. We cannot spread these thoughts in public. We must only oppose the assertion that peaceful understanding with Russia is possible."¹⁵

But how is one to reconcile Claß's sweeping demand to expel all "*those in the service of socialist propaganda*" from the German Reich without further ado,¹⁶ which seemed to leave no room for socialist demagogy, with Hitler's "National Socialist German Workers' Party" and its social-demagogic party program? Again, Claß had certainly left himself room for demagogic maneuvers. He condemned the Socialist

"in the sense of hostility to the state" and also hinted that "our public life" could "digest a workers' party that stands on the ground of the state, the nation, the monarchy ... can digest, perhaps even use quite well".¹⁷

After all, there had been a nationalist German Workers' Party in Austria-Hungary under All-German rule since 1904, which was at least temporarily funded from the "military treasury" of the All-German Association.¹⁸ This organization, whose main field of activity was in northern Bohemia and northern Moravia and which called itself the German National Socialist Workers' Party from spring 1918, was under the ideological influence of the Austrian All-German Georg von Schönerer, who purposefully sought to develop a German nationalist movement in the Habsburg Empire, but did not always meet with Claß's approval. The declared intention of the Austrian All-Germans, who exerted great influence on the young Hitler, was to stir up national opposition by all demagogic means and in this way also to effect a break-in into the workers' movement.

This made the big industrialists sit up and take notice, as it offered a welcome opportunity to use nationalism to devalue the socialist lip service and win over privileged workers to the nationalist movement. For some time, there had been serious deliberations and fierce controversies in the employers' associations over the question of how to destroy or subjugate the workers' movement from within. Those heavy industrialists who advocated an unconditional master-in-house position and fundamentally rejected the representation of workers' and employees' interests were opposed by the representatives of the modern electrical engineering groups, who were prepared to cooperate with the opportunistic leaders within the labor movement in the long term.

[265] of the social democratic party and trade union organization. Before the first

¹⁴ Frymann, 1st ed. p. 169.

¹⁵ ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband, No. 88, Bl. 6, Bl. 6v; Claß' statement at the meeting of the Alldeutscher Verband's Executive Committee in Munich on April 19, 1913.

¹⁶ Frymann, 1st ed. p. 4, p. 67.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁸ ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband, no. 88, p. 12, p. 12v.

After the Second World War, however, the main focus of employers was on the development of so-called economically peaceful workers' organizations. Even within heavy industry, there was growing support for this.¹⁹

This was the reason why the All-German Association could no longer ignore this issue. At the committee meeting in Munich on April 19, 1913, a motion was submitted by the nationalist publicist Friedrich Lange, publisher of the All-German-oriented "Deutsche Zeitung" and member of the board of the Krupp-financed committee for the promotion of patriotic workers' associations, for the purpose of supporting the "national workers' movement". The reporter from the main management of the Alldeutscher Verband, Major Freiherr von Stössel, "did not believe in lasting success, as the workers were only interested in material things", but recommended that Lange's proposals be taken up. Hamburg port director Winter, who was less unworldly in his assessment than the Potsdam officer, was far more resolute: "The support of such organizations, which seek to improve their situation in peace with the employers, is highly recommended." The owner of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung in Essen, Reismann-Grone, on the other hand, urged caution. As chairman of the association, however, Claß insisted that "no rejection" should be given "if there is any hope that something good" for the intentions of the Alldeutscher Verband would come of it.²⁰

This was one of many items on the agenda that was to take on great significance for the future. Just as in the question of relations with Russia, the course had already been set in the year before the outbreak of the First World War. The All-German Association declared its interest in a "national workers' movement" in an official resolution. From then on, the All-German Association was constantly concerned with supporting and promoting this movement. On July 3, 1913, the Executive Committee received a new proposal from Lange, who at the time was devoting particular attention to this issue. He intended to hold a demonstrative rally at the monument to Hermann the Cheruscan in the Teutoburg Forest in August 1913, to which not only the representatives of all "national workers' organizations", but also the leading representatives of the Alldeutscher Verband, the Ostmarkenverein and all other imperialist propaganda organizations of the ruling class should be invited.

Lange himself outlined his concern with the words: "In my concern for the reliable underpinning of our German future, I see the continuing national and economic-political disintegration of our people by social democracy and its trade unions as the worst danger." Since all the antidotes used by the ruling class to date had proved inadequate, he wanted to declare in a "rally for the national workers" "that the worker can only be won back for the people and the fatherland by his own kind, the worker who has been incited to become a 'proletarian' only by the worker who has reawakened to bourgeois consciousness (! - J. P.)". Lange pointed out that a "main committee of national workers' associations" had existed since 1910 and that these associations had a total of almost 200,000 members. However, he failed to mention that most of them were craftsmen and foremen. This strength had to be put at the service of the "organic healing" of the German people much more than before. For this reason, the [266] chairman of the All-German Association was to be the main speaker at the planned rally.²¹

This request caused the Executive Committee no small embarrassment. Director Winter had informed Claß in writing about his impressions at a preliminary meeting with Lange:

"As indisputably correct as some of Lange's ideas are, especially the basic idea that the national working class must be helped by all available means, I am doubtful that the path he has chosen will lead to lasting success. Once again, there is a lack of unity." The German National Association of Commercial Employees - the employees' organization - "which is responsible for the

¹⁹ Stegmann, p. 353 ff.

²⁰ ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband, No. 88, Bl. 2.

²¹ Ibid., no. 89, p. 24 ff., esp. dl. 42; Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Alldeutscher Verband in Berlin on July 3, 1913.

The all-German "Reich Association against Social Democracy" did not want to jeopardize its good connections with the Christian trade unions, which in turn were not considered sufficiently "national" and "economically peaceful". The all-German "Reich Association against Social Democracy" had personal differences with Lange. Director Winter also alluded to Lange's need for presentation with his comment: "A spectacle, but only a spectacle!" However, he was again of the opinion that no opportunity should be missed to carry out all-German propaganda among workers. The moral help that Lange wanted to give the nationalist workers' organizations in their fight against Social Democracy "would not be enough, however; material help must supplement it effectively and sustainably".²²

Some committee members spoke out against participating in Lange's project. Reismann-Grone referred to previous bad experiences with Lange and did not want to offend the Christian trade unions. Claß, however, prevailed with the argument that Lange's person was irrelevant. After all, it was a matter of supporting all approaches in order to achieve a truly comprehensive "national labor movement". As a result, the participation in the rally in the Teutoburg Forest was agreed to, but in the end it did not take place.²³ At later committee meetings, this fundamental decision was repeatedly returned to.²⁴

This proves that even before the First World War, the All-German Association showed a growing interest in building, promoting and developing a nationalist workers' movement, which was to be based on the existing interest groups of privileged workers and employees, and which was to be helped to develop an all-German "world view" based on racism and anti-Semitism. Before 1914, nobody in the leading committees of the All-German Association thought that this would one day require a national "socialist" de-magogy. The reservations expressed by Reismann-Grone in particular against any deviation from the old Bismarck course clearly show the ideological obstacles.

The outbreak of war in 1914 did not cause the All-German Association to change its policy towards the workers. The chauvinist frenzy, which even the Social Democratic party leadership did not escape and which temporarily confused a large part of the Social Democratic electorate, seemed rather to confirm the possibility of getting by with nationalist policies alone in the desired re-education of the [267] working class. But the longer the war lasted, the more this proved to be an illusion. When the All-German Association brought its excessive war aims program to the attention of the public, the legend of the defense of the fatherland, which had caused so much confusion among the working class and the other popular classes, could no longer be maintained.

The All-German Association wanted to counteract the danger of being isolated in public and losing all influence on working-class circles by all means. In mid-1916, the lobbyist system of war aims memoranda was supplemented by a supposedly independent committee movement for a "German peace". This also included the formation of special "workers'" committees. As these could not operate like the central "Independent Committee for a German Peace" under the leadership of professors such as Dietrich Schäfer, the search was on for suitable "workers". In Bremen, Wilhelm Wahl, officially identified as a locksmith, founded a "Free Committee for a German Workers' Peace". In reality, however, Wahl was the head of an "economically peaceful", i.e. business-friendly works association at the Krupp shipyard AG Weser.²⁵ In addition, the advocates of an unconditional

²² Ibid., p. 27; Winter's letter of June 22, 1913 to Claß.

²³ Ibid., p. 60.

²⁴ Ibid., No. 93, p. 7; Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Alldeutscher Verband in Berlin on January 10, 1914.

²⁵ See Karl-Heinz Schädlich, Der "Unabhängige Ausschuß für einen Deutschen Frieden" als ein Zentrum der Annexionspropaganda des deutschen Imperialismus im ersten Weltkrieg, in: Politik im Krieg 1914-1918. Studien zur Politik der deutschen herrschenden Klassen im ersten Weltkrieg, Berlin 1964, p. 50 ff., esp. p. 57; Stegmann, p. 381 f..

Warfare until complete victory to propagate this goal the "German Fatherland Party"²⁶.

Both organizations - the "Free Committee for a German Workers' Peace" and the "German Fatherland Party" - ideologically controlled by the All-German Association, became direct accomplices of the Nazi movement. The scene of the action was the Bavarian capital of Munich. A very peculiar tangle of political and social contradictions had formed here. The palette of parties, associations and organizations ranged from the most backward Bavarian particularism to anarchist left-wing radicalism. The publisher Julius Friedrich Lehmann, a member of the executive committee of the Alldeutscher Verband, was active in this field of tension. As the financially strong and enterprising owner of a publishing house specializing in medical literature, he had the direct opportunity to publish most of the All-German propaganda publications.²⁷ He had not forgotten Lange's advice to pay more attention to the nationalist workers' organizations and to bear in mind "that the worker can only be won back to the bourgeoisie through his equals". This was also the conviction of Paul Tafel, an engineer from business circles, who represented the German-Völkisch camp in Munich, which was closely linked to the All-German Association, and who also belonged to the German Fatherland Party. As their name suggests, the Deutschvölkische had taken on the special task of establishing a direct connection to the "people" on the basis of a romanticized ideology of nationality and a pronounced Germanic cult.²⁸

[268] The worker Lehmann and Tafel were looking for was finally found in the tool publisher Anton Drexler, who worked in the main railroad workshops in Munich. Drexler, who by his own admission had long since fallen out with members of social democratic workers' organizations, approached the German Fatherland Party to have an annexationist appeal printed. He was welcomed with open arms, but only remained a party member for three months. He had to realize that in this function he could not achieve anything at all with his colleagues in the Munich main railway workshops. "As much as I defended myself," was his own admission, "to my colleagues against the accusation that I was promoting capitalist interests, it didn't help, in their eyes I was either the 'stupid one' or the 'stupid one'." "Paid".²⁹

It was therefore considered appropriate in the circles of the Munich local group of the German Fatherland Party to let him operate seemingly completely independently. However, Paul Tafel took over the supervision. He made sure that Drexler was no longer, as he himself naively admitted, "*groping in the dark everywhere*".³⁰ The first test came in January 1918, when more than a million metalworkers went on strike in the face of German imperialism's attempts to exploit the Soviet peace offer to enforce a predatory peace of victory. Munich was also caught up in this strike movement. The All-Germans expected Drexler to take counter-action. He had published an article in the "München-Augsburger Abendzeitung" on "The failure of the proletarian international and the failure of the idea of fraternization", in which he was asked to "hold out". He then had an appeal published in which it was categorically stated that "striking is madness". The workers were to be dissuaded from fighting with the argument that their French and English class comrades would only take advantage of this because

²⁶ See Robert Ullrich, Deutsche Vaterlandspartei (DVLP) 1917-19 18, in: Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, vol. 1, p. 620 ff.

²⁷ ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband, No. 93, p. 3 ff.

²⁸ See the relevant articles in the two-volume handbook Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, Leipzig 1968, 1970. On Tafel's role, see the files on the Deutschvölkischer [268] Schutz- und Trutzbund, in: ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband, No. 252 to 256. Further information was taken from the books by Georg Franz-Willing, Die Hitlerbewegung. Der Ursprung 1919-1922, Hamburg 1962; Werner Maser, Die Frühgeschichte der NSDAP. Hitlers Weg bis 1924, Frankfurt a. M. 1965.

²⁹ Anton Drexler, My political awakening. From the diary of a German socialist worker, Munich 1919, p. 13.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 12.

In the struggle for peace there is no proletarian internationalism, only military victory can help.³¹

The result of this propaganda campaign was a great disappointment for Drexler and his backers. The class-conscious Munich workers sharply distanced themselves from such subversions. Drexler became increasingly isolated even among his immediate work colleagues. Although he was allowed by his all-German mentors to call for the "ruthless punishment of war profiteers" and "a fairer distribution of food", i.e. to accommodate the general mood of the workers, his appeals in the main railroad workshop earned him "threats, even spitting on him". As a mockery, young workers erected a wooden cross for him with the words: "Died of starvation for the fatherland."³² Under these circumstances, Drexler sought support from the Bremen "Free Committee for a German Workers' Peace", which, thanks to the support of all-German and patriotic parties [269] and the "Main Committee of National Workers' Associations", was able to expand rapidly and eventually even hold a national conference.

Drexler agreed to found a local committee in Munich under the name "Free Workers' Committee for a Good Peace". A resolution to this effect was passed on March 7, 1918. The subsequently distributed appeal clearly shows that Drexler and his backers, inspired by bad experiences, considered a far higher degree of demagoguery than previously necessary. A brutal peace by force was apparently rejected and a good peace was demanded without reference to Alsace-Lorraine. However, the will to win of the working class and the Bavarians in general could only be raised again when the "inhibitions of perseverance" were overcome by "appropriate steps taken by the authorities" would be eliminated and the shameless "activities of war profiteers and surreptitious traders" would be put a stop to.³³

This demagogic form of propaganda was more successful. Drexler was able to recruit around 40 members for his committee. The founding core consisted mainly of fellow workers whom he had recruited himself in the main railroad workshop. This was certainly very instructive for his all-German mentors. In their efforts to finally gain a foothold in working-class circles, they had made the important experience that this was no longer possible through purely all-German propaganda. A good dose of social demagoguery had to be added. Above all, it was essential to tie in with the day-to-day interests of the workers. In any case, Lange's old advice that the workers should be spoken to "through their own kind" had proved to be correct. Too obvious creations of the All-German Association and the German Fatherland Party had no chance of success. The "German Workers' and Employees' Party" (DAAP), which was founded in 1918 by Wilhelm Gellert under the patronage of the German Fatherland Party, suffered from this from the outset. Gellert, who was himself an employee of the Kalisyndikat in Berlin and had put together a founding committee of people of his ilk, was unable to develop any appeal and has only remained interesting as symptomatic evidence of such efforts.³⁴

Drexler, on the other hand, never tired of emphasizing the worker "*who still stands at the vise - and remains standing*".³⁵ However, he wanted nothing to do with the actual proletariat, felt that as a tool publisher he himself belonged to the middle class and was out to win over skilled and resident workers who still saw themselves as craftsmen. This was precisely the target group that the Alldeutscher Verband had in mind before 1914. The class-conscious core of the proletariat was rightly considered unreachable and was suspect to the All-German Association because of its class-struggle attitude.

³¹ Ibid., p. 18 f.

³² Ibid., p. 19.

³³ Maser, p. 143 f.

³⁴ Stegmann, p. 392 ff.

³⁵ Drexler, p. 17. See also Führer befiehlt ... Self-testimonies from the "Kampfzeit" of the NSDAP, documentation and analysis, edited by Albrecht Tyrell, Düsseldorf 1969, p. 20 ff.

When Lange's proposals were discussed in the Executive Committee, it was not only the Essen newspaper owner Reismann-Grone who urged caution; Director Winter, who otherwise showed great understanding for the controversial issue, also raised the question in his letter to Claß with concern as to whether contact with the Christian trade unions might not already be dangerous. After all, [270] it was not certain that in the event of such cooperation, the "yellow" workers' organizations, which vacillated between the class fronts, would be fertilized by the clearly right-wing "national" organizations; "things could turn out differently".³⁶ For the Alldeutscher Verband, which represented the interests of the ruling class, workers' organizations were hot potatoes.

However, the political developments at the end of the First World War forced all parties and associations of the ruling class to review their attitude towards the workers' movement and to look for ways out of a situation that had become highly critical. It became obvious that the capitalist social system had entered a serious crisis, at least in the losing states, and that monarchist and openly anti-working-class forms of rule could no longer be maintained. In Russia, the proletarian revolution had even triumphed and held its ground despite German intervention. In the fall of 1918, the military leadership of German imperialism had to admit that the war was lost.

Under these circumstances, the all-German Siegfrieden propaganda had also lost all meaning among the workers. The Electoral Workers' Committee movement disappeared from the political scene, as did the entire German Fatherland Party. For the All-German Association, the military and political collapse of the empire was a catastrophe that could only be surpassed by the victory of a socialist revolution. Even well-known members and leading representatives hastened to abandon the supposedly sinking ship of the All-German Association, which was at least caught in the fiercest crossfire. At the meeting of the Executive Committee on 19 and 20 October 1918 in Berlin, however, no bankruptcy balance sheet was drawn up, but the slogan for new efforts in the realization of old goals was issued. Traditional objections to overly demagogic methods of struggle were also dropped as a matter of necessity.

General von Keim declared that "at times it is appropriate to pull in the lion's tail and stick out the fox's tail". Publisher Lehmann appealed to the willingness of the members and backers of the Alldeutscher Verband to pay: "I have already collected 40,000 marks from my closest circle of acquaintances and believe I will soon have 100,000; I ask you to do the same everywhere so that we receive the means for national propaganda. Every merchant knows that it is now a matter of life or death and that otherwise he will lose $\frac{3}{4}$ of his property." Claß emphasized the propagandistic benefits of anti-Semitic propaganda: "I fully agree that, as already suggested, the Jewish question should not only be treated scientifically and politically, but also practically and demagogically ... I will not shy away from any means and in this respect I will adhere to Heinrich von Kleist's saying, which was aimed at the French: 'Beat them to death, the world court will not ask you why'." Justice Councillor Stolte was "above all concerned with the 'how'": "I am of the same opinion that it is not a matter of winning over the educated, but of capturing the masses. I would like to say the following about the 'how': we must (know how to) create ways and means to reach the people. We must go to their meetings and organize them ourselves. A huge number of agitators must work in the trade unions, and we must also take to the streets."³⁷

[271] Since the All-German Association was too discredited in the public eye and Claß even had to cancel the November meeting of the Executive Committee in view of the outbreak of the revolution, the focus of political work was shifted to the German national organizations. They already had greater experience in the use of demagogic means

³⁶ ZStA Potsdam, Alldeutscher Verband, No. 89, p. 27.

³⁷ Ibid., no. 121, p. 22, p. 40v, p. 44, p. 45v; Meeting of the Executive Committee [271] of the Alldeutscher Verband in Berlin on October 19/20, 1918 - The quotation is based on the original transcript, since Claß, for example, later edited

his remarks.

and already had a certain petty-bourgeois mass base. As early as October 1918, the anti-Semite Theodor Fritsch, who came from the Stöcker movement and had once co-founded the German-Socialist Party, warned the chief executive of the All-German Association, Baron von Vietinghoff-Scheel, "to be mindful in good time of the renewal of men" who could take the political reins into their own hands "when chaos breaks out". However, it would be advisable "not to let the all-German aspect come to the fore too much". He had long since pointed out the coming dangers. He had been wrongly scolded as a pessimist: "The development has been much worse and faster than I painted it on the wall."³⁸

In Munich, where in Lehmann's opinion the German People's Party could no longer be relied upon even before the November Revolution,³⁹ attempts were made to follow this advice. For a few months, a seemingly unsuitable figure came to the fore and - as can be seen in retrospect - was at the cradle of the Nazi movement. It was Rudolf Freiherr von Sebottendorff.⁴⁰ His original name is said to have been Erwin Torre, but he had allegedly been adopted by a nobleman in the Orient.⁴¹ When he returned to Germany in 1917, he joined the Germanic Order, which was founded in 1912 and in which Theodor Fritsch also played a role. This extremely ethnically oriented secret society wanted to cultivate the Germanic in the German people in the style of the Masonic lodges and fight Jewish influence by all means.

Sebottendorff took over the Bavarian Province of the Order. As he had considerable financial resources at his disposal, he was able to develop lively organizational and propaganda activities. He collected followers through press advertisements, for whom he published the "Allgemeine Ordens-Nachrichten" and the magazine "Runen". He used the swastika and the later SS runes as symbols. In the summer of 1918, he bought the "Münchner Beobachter", gave it the character of a sports paper as a disguise and made it the newspaper of the nascent Nazi movement. The name was later changed to

"Völkischer Beobachter". It eventually rented rooms in Munich's "Vier Jahreszeiten" hotel, which could be used for meetings and were available to all reactionary and nationalist organizations in Munich.

Sebottendorff, who mysteriously called his Munich order organization the "Thule", placed great emphasis on the ideological training of his followers. He carried out intensive anti-Semitic propaganda in the spirit of the Teutonic Order. He reduced everything - the shortcomings of warfare, the food shortages, the lost war and finally the outbreak of the revolution - to the work of Jews. This was the simple formula that made it possible to channel the growing dissatisfaction of politically backward sections of the population in the most primitive way. This is why anti-Semitism later became the "world view" of the Nazi movement.

From this perspective, Anton Drexler's efforts could also be given new content. When he held a public event in October 1918 to once again propagandize for a "good" peace, Sebottendorff sent the sports journalist Karl Harrer to observe the undertaking. The aim was to transform Drexler's workers' committee into a political workers' party. Harrer, who personally wanted to work more in secret along the lines of the "Thule", initially agreed with Drexler to form a political workers' circle, in which he primarily carried out anti-Semitic propaganda. This meant that Drexler was able to add anti-Semitic accents to his proven criticism of profiteers and speculators and make it more acceptable to the "respectable" war profiteers.⁴²

Around the turn of the year 1918 to 1919, an appeal by the Teutonic Order "To the German People" appeared in No. 15 of Sebottendorff's "Allgemeine Ordens-Nachrichten", in which the founding of the Germanic Order was announced.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 6 f.; Fritsch's letter of October 18, 1918.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 47.

⁴⁰ See Rudolf von Sebottendorff, *Before Hitler Came*, Munich 1933.

⁴¹ Maser, p. 146 f.

⁴² See Manfred Weißbecker, *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) 1919 to 1945*, in: *Die bür-*

Dietrich Eichholtz and Kurt Gossweiler (editors): Fascism Research - 207

gerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, vol. 2, Leipzig 1970, p. 384 ff.

of a "German Socialist Party", which was to be both "German nationalist" and "socialist".⁴³ This had never been considered by the All-German Association's Executive Committee. Obviously, however, the nationalist leadership circles had come to the conclusion that, in view of the completely changed political situation, this was the only way to achieve mass influence. For it had become clear that even the petty-bourgeois, marginal layers of the working class were striving for socialism. Under the impression of the war experiences and the shameless activities of the big capitalist war profiteers, the petty bourgeoisie also began to make friends with the idea of socialism. Even the old bourgeois middle class, which was on the brink of ruin, saw its reservations about "big capitalism" confirmed. However, the ideas of socialism in these circles were highly confused and for the most part had nothing to do with what the working class wanted.

The Deutschvölkische took advantage of this. They cleverly took up the popular slogans and catchphrases of the time. Their siren song of an ideal world, which corresponded to romantic notions of the past, was entirely geared towards the middle classes and petty bourgeoisie in town and country, who had been severely shaken by war and inflation. However, it also appealed to the workers from these classes or those aspiring to join them. However, the actual goal for which a German Socialist Party was to be founded was the fight against "false Jewish socialism". This was understood to mean the image of socialism coined by Marx and Engels, which the revolutionary workers' movement in Germany was fighting to realize and which the Bolsheviks in Russia were beginning to realize under Lenin's leadership. This was the old main task that the All-German Association had set itself and which the "Reich Association against Social Democracy" had served. However, the form in which this struggle took place was changed. The concept of socialism was no longer to be directly attacked and rejected. Instead, attempts were made to misuse it in a reactionary sense.

[273] The all-German circles in Munich were guided in their own way by considerations that prompted the Stuttgart electrical industrialist Robert Bosch - personally no friend of the fascists - to advocate the "opening of large safety valves" on the eve of the November Revolution. He wrote imploringly to State Secretary Haußmann that this was the only way to "save ourselves from a catastrophe", because "the further we move to the left, the sooner we will be able to make an impression and divert a catastrophe". As far as the choice of means was concerned, even this supporter of bourgeois liberalism had no reservations: "... if the house is on fire, you put it out with manure, at the risk of it stinking in the house for a while afterwards."⁴⁴

For similar reasons, other circles staged a national "socialist" propaganda campaign, which amounted to the direct misuse of proletarian battle slogans for counter-revolutionary and fascist purposes.

The basic model for this had been created in Munich by engineer Gottfried Feder. He, who was praised by Hitler in "Mein Kampf" as the great and fundamental theorist of the Nazi movement⁴⁵, had held a leading position in industry before the war. However, he had failed as an entrepreneur and inventor. He had obviously had bad personal experiences with finance capital, as his hatred was directed against the "interest bondage" practiced by the moneylenders. A memorandum to this effect from November 1918 attracted a great deal of attention in the "Thule" and was recognized as a useful propaganda weapon of the "National Socialist" movement. Feder, who himself emphasized that he had "no real socialist ideas whatsoever",⁴⁶ developed into one of the most eager propagandists on the

⁴³ Sebottendorff, p. 171 (photocopy p. 205).

⁴⁴ Reprinted in: Dokumente zur deutschen Geschichte 1917-1919, ed. by Wolfgang Ruge and Wolfgang Schumann, edited by Joachim Petzold and Dagmar Zink, Berlin 1975, p. 53, Doc. 36; Letter from Bosch to Haußmann dated October 24, 1918.⁴⁵ Hitler, p. 229.

⁴⁶ Gottfried Feder, Innere Geschichte der Zinsknechtschaft, in: Völkischer Beobachter, 72/1920 (reprinted in: Feder, Der Kampf gegen die Hochfinanz, Munich 1933, p. 11 ff.).

numerous German nationalist events in the Bavarian capital. He developed his ideological concept and political arguments into a brochure, which was published in 1919 by Franz Eher, later the main Nazi publishing house, under the title "Das Manifest zur Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft des Geldes".

In terms of content, Feder was again primarily addressing the petty bourgeoisie and the so-called "upper" working class, who were burdened by debt and inflation. He took advantage of the fact that interest really was a scourge of small businessmen, craftsmen, farmers and also of those working in the

"middle class" striving workers. His opening thesis was: "*Mammonism* is the serious, all-encompassing and overgrowing disease from which our present-day cultural world, indeed the whole of humanity, suffers ... *The main source of power of mammonism is the laborious and endless inflow of wealth created by interest.*"⁴⁷

As the "only remedy, the radical remedy for the recovery of suffering humanity", Feder recommended "breaking the bondage of money to interest". If social ills were to be overcome, the lever had to be applied to loan capital. This was not a new idea in itself. As early as 1908, the all-German national economist Gustav Ruhland had declared "interest bondage" [274] to be the cause of all social misery in his "System of Political Economy".⁴⁸ In his Kaiserbuch, Claß had also not contradicted such demagogic arguments, but merely tried to prevent them from becoming a general criticism of capitalism.⁴⁹ Feder did not want that either.

He explicitly stated that capital was not perishable per se. Rather, industrial capital created jobs and provided military protection. For every German, the name Krupp, for example, represented the "high point of our industrial development": "For hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens, the Krupp company meant bread and work. For our people, defense and weapons."⁵⁰ This industrial capital should therefore be protected and promoted. However, the power of lending capital must be broken; then one could also think of abolishing all direct and indirect taxes, because these flowed into the pockets of the big money lenders anyway.

Feder's proposals for reorganizing the economy and public finances could not be taken seriously in any way. After all, interest-bearing credit is an inseparable part of the capitalist mode of production. The only important thing was that they had an astonishing propagandistic effect, because Feder's slogan of "breaking the bondage of interest" was eagerly taken up by the fascist groups and accepted with approval by large sections of the middle classes. Its realization seemed to bring the hoped-for salvation to the petty bourgeoisie, who were in dire straits and desperately seeking a way out of their economic difficulties. The fact that Feder was forced to disregard some of the interests of the rentier middle class, who lived off interest, was of little political consequence. In any case, this section of the population was out of the question as a mass base for the fascist movement.

The representatives of large industrial interests saw the confrontation between creative and acquisitive capital, as already indicated by Claß, preserved. Even the bankers did not necessarily feel attacked. Feder had linked lending capital to Jewry even more decisively than his all-German masters. If necessary, the "Aryan" moneylender could point to the productive intentions of his "race" in financial operations. Anti-Semitism proved once again, and to an even greater extent, to be suitable for defusing the anti-capitalist criticism necessary for mass manipulation. Those who argued as Feder did were able to gain the approval of broad sections of the population dissatisfied with capitalism as well as the demands of "Aryan" finance capital.

⁴⁷ Feder, *Das Manifest zur Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft des Geldes*, Munich 1919, p. 7.

⁴⁸ Gustav Ruhland, *Das System der politischen Ökonomie*, vols. 1-3, Berlin 1903 ff.

⁵⁰ Feder, p.

⁴⁹ Frymann, 1st ed. p. 58 ff.

⁵⁰ Feather, p.
18.

Drexler finally saw an opportunity to deal with the political-economic theories of the Marxists, which had caused him great difficulties in the past, in a seemingly scientific manner. Years later, Hitler admitted in "Mein Kampf": "For the first time in my life I heard a principled discussion of international stock exchange and lending capital. After listening to Feder's first lecture, the thought immediately flashed through my mind that I had now found the way to one of the most essential prerequisites for the foundation of a new party. In my eyes, Feder's merit lay in having established with ruthless brutality the speculative as well as economic character of [275] stock exchange and loan capital, but in having laid bare its primeval precondition of interest. His explanations were so correct in all fundamental questions that the critics of them from the outset doubted not so much the theoretical correctness of the idea as the practical possibility of its realization. But what in the eyes of others was a weakness of Feder's exposition was in mine its strength."⁵¹

Hitler thus openly admitted that he valued Feder's concept so highly precisely because it remained in the realm of a non-binding theory and had no prospect of realization. It could therefore be used for purely propagandistic purposes without tying one's hands for practical economic policy. This was also the opinion of the all-German and Deutschvölkisch directors of the National Socialist propaganda campaign, in which Feder played a leading role, and which was intended both to win back the petty bourgeoisie of reaction, moved by revolutionary ideas, and to enable the long sought-after breakthrough into the ranks of the working class.

As much as Feder remained grounded in a petty-bourgeois world of ideas in terms of content, he sought to create the impression of a socialist revolutionary. To this end, he set about exploiting the progressive associations of his listeners and readers in the most shameless way. Even the word "manifesto" in the title of the brochure was not chosen at random. The allusion to the "Communist Manifesto" by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, which was once again much discussed in 1918/19, was intended to arouse interest.

Feder even wanted to profit directly from the echo of famous slogans of the revolutionary workers' movement. He concluded his pamphlet in defense of so-called productive capitalism with the world-famous battle cry against capitalist exploitation: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" However, he "translated" the word proletarian with the far more general term "working people". This allowed the inclusion of petty bourgeois of all kinds and even left a loophole open for industrial capitalists, factory directors and executives, who were all "working people" and suffered equally under the pressure of Jewish interest bondage.

Feder chose the color red for the cover of his brochure so as not to leave any popular associations unused. For the same reason, the Nazis later pinned their swastika emblem on a red banner, as many people associated this color with the idea of progress and revolution. And finally, Feder even misused the beginning of the famous radio slogan of the victorious October Revolution "To All, All!" as an eye-catcher on the cover of the brochure. However, he left not the slightest doubt about his position against Bolshevism, which was the "wrong means" in the fight against "Mammonism". The nationalization of industrial enterprises and banks in Russia had allegedly proved to be a failure and was madness. The real purpose of the world revolution that had been set in motion was the struggle against capital's bondage to interest; however, the "methods which Bolshevism seeks to apply for this purpose are ... Iron beard cures. They are an attempt to use a dissecting knife to help a sick person suffering from internal poisoning by amputating his head, arms and legs."⁵²

This turn towards a national "socialist" demagogy, which was ultimately to lead to Drexler's German Workers' Party being renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party, and which was characteristic of Nazi ideology, was certainly not something Claß had in mind.

⁵² Feather, p. 15.

⁵¹ Hitler, p. 229.

⁵² Feather, p.
15.

when, in 1912, he referred in his *Kaiserbuch* to the usefulness of a nationalistically-minded workers' party loyal to the state, which - as the philosopher Oswald Spengler once put it⁵³ - "the decent part of the working class" would follow. It resulted from a political development that caused the ruling class as a whole to rethink its relations with the working class and the masses in general.

While the politically more flexible groups of monopoly capital, who preferred to operate with parliamentary means, placed their hopes in the appeasing effect of reform socialist propaganda at the end of the First World War and well into the Weimar Republic, and consequently cooperated with the right-wing social democratic leaders, the most reactionary and aggressive groups began to befriend National Socialist demagoguery and turn to the fascist movement. This was by no means only the case in Munich.

In Berlin, a hateful enemy of Soviet power, Eduard Stadtler, had already attracted the attention of major industrialists and bankers in 1919. They provided him with increasing amounts of money and enabled him to set up a "General Secretariat for the Study and Combat of Bolshevism".⁵⁴ A meeting was even organized at which Stadtler gave a lecture on the "Bolshevik danger" to the top representatives of German monopoly capital. The most powerful and cunning of all Ruhr industrialists, the later inflation king Hugo Stinnes, subsequently ensured that an "anti-Bolshevist fund" of 500 million marks was raised, from which counter-revolutionary activities and fascist organizations could be financed.

Hugo Stinnes and his general managers Albert Vögler and Karl Fehrman did not take offense at the fact that Stadtler considered it necessary to advocate "German socialism" at workers' meetings. They knew exactly what he meant from personal conversations with him. They were also aware of Stadtler's decisive role in the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Like many monopoly capitalists after him, Stinnes, who according to Stadtler was to become the "national dictator of the social revolution",⁵⁵ saw fascist socialist propaganda as an opportunity to drive forward state monopoly development and increase his own sphere of influence - not least at the expense of bank capital. Stadtler's plan to place Stinnes at the head of a German state that called itself socialist completely exposes the class character of this national-"socialist" demagoguery.

Even most German monopoly capitalists no longer wanted to follow suit. Apart from the fact that in 1919 the majority still considered cooperation with the right-wing Social Democratic party and trade union leaders to be necessary and found the parliamentary system of government of the Weimar Republic quite useful, they rightly saw Hugo Stinnes' personal quest for power behind Stadtler's activities. Above all, [277] however, the ruling class in Germany first had to get used to the new national "socialist" method of struggle.

An ideological breakthrough among the ruling class was brought about by the Munich philosopher Spengler. He had made a name for himself in 1918 with the publication of his book "The Decline of the West". He, who was held in high esteem by Ruhr capital and who gained an influential mentor and personal friend in the industrial manager Paul Reusch, recognized precisely that socialism had become the "loudest question of the time".⁵⁶ He therefore also began to turn his attention to the problem of how the widespread popular desire for socialism could be misused in a reactionary sense. To this end, in 1919 he published the political manifesto "Preußentum und Sozialismus" (Prussianism and Socialism) in Beck's publishing house.

⁵³ Oswald Spengler, *Briefe 1913-1936*, edited in collaboration with Manfred Schröter by Anton M. Koktanek, Munich 1963, p. 112 f.; Spengler to Klöres on December 18, 1918.

⁵⁴ Eduard Stadtler, *Als Antibolschewist 1918/19*, Düsseldorf (1935), p. 12 ff.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁵⁶ Oswald Spengler, *Preußentum und Sozialismus*, Munich 1920, p. 3.

In it, he expressly demanded that "German socialism be liberated from Marx" and placed on a completely different, anti-communist, basis.⁵⁷

Spengler believed that the best way to do this was to take Prussianism as a model. In his opinion, true socialism could be found in the old Prussian kings. He meant: "Organization of production and transport by the state; everyone a servant of the state; in other words, non-liberal and authoritative forms of the harshest kind".⁵⁸ The possibility he developed of using socialist slogans to revalue proven models of reaction and to pass off state monopolistic development as socialism made a deep impression on the ruling class. From then on, the most reactionary and aggressive groups in German monopoly capital were desperately looking for a suitable political force that could put the theoretical path laid out into political practice. The small German Workers' Party, which had meanwhile been founded in Munich by Drexler, Harrer and Lotter at the instigation of the "Thule", had not yet been able to assert itself. Obviously, it lacked a leader who knew how to mobilize the masses and had the necessary rhetorical talent. The party founders did not possess these qualities.

However, the anti-Semitic writer and later mentor of Hitler, Dietrich Eckart, put it in drastic terms: "A guy who can hear a machine gun has to be at the top. The pack must get scared in their pants. I can't have an officer, the people no longer have any respect for them. A worker with his mouth in the right place would be best. Christ, if Noske hadn't been such a ... would have been! He doesn't need much sense, politics is the stupidest business in the world. I'd rather have a vain monkey who can give the Reds a juicy answer and doesn't run away from every swinging chair leg than a dozen learned professors sitting trembling on the damp seat of their pants. It has to be a bachelor, then we'll get the women!"⁵⁹

This was the situation in which Captain Mayr from the intelligence and press office of the Reichswehr Group Command IV (Munich) instructed Private Adolf Hitler to attend a meeting of the German Workers' Party and report on the intentions of this small organization. The meeting took place on September 12, 1919 in the "Sternecker". The speaker was once again Gottfried Feder. He [278] spoke on the subject of "How and by what means can capitalism be eliminated?". Hitler was not content with observation. As he debated a Bavarian separatist within 15 minutes, Drexler whispered enthusiastically to the secretary sitting next to him: "Man, he's got a gosch'n, we can use him." He pressed his newly published brochure "My Political Awakening" into Hitler's hand. A few days later, Hitler received a handwritten note from Lotter informing him that he had been accepted as a party member.⁶⁰ As would soon become clear, this meant that a suitable "drummer" had been found for the Nazi ideology that already existed in principle.

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⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁸ Ibid.; derselbe, Briefe, p. 112 f.; Spengler to Klöres on December 18, 1918.

⁵⁹ Transmitted by Konrad Heiden, Adolf Hitler, Zurich 1936, p. 76 f.

⁶⁰ Franz-Willing, p. 66 f.

Heinz Malorny: Friedrich Nietzsche and German Fascism

When the fascists established their dictatorship in Germany in 1933, when a bloody wave of terror swept across the country without equal and outstanding works of humanist intellectual culture were thrown into the flames, bourgeois anti-fascist intellectuals expressed their horror and their incomprehension of the events by asking: How could it happen that Germany, the land of poets and thinkers, became a land of judges and executioners?

Let us leave it open whether the question is posed correctly, whether the premise that Germany was once the land of poets and thinkers is correct. In any case, the question has its rational core in that it identifies the problem: How could it come about that in the country that had produced a Lessing and Herder, a Goethe and Schiller, a Kant, Fichte and Hegel, a Bach, Handel and Beethoven, the barbaric evil spirit of Hitler, Goebbels and Rosenberg triumphed? How was it that the intellectual defenses against the poison of fascist ideology were so low among the bourgeois intelligentsia as a whole? Of course, in this context we should not overlook the fact that the best representatives of bourgeois intellectual life, literature, art and science also emigrated and for the most part actively participated in the ideological struggle against fascism. The examples of Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, Albert Einstein and many others are well known. But the mass of the bourgeois intelligentsia, including the bearers of very well-known names, remained in Germany, adapted to it, many made a commitment to the fascist regime, allowed themselves to be "brought into line" in order to maintain their job opportunities, insofar as they did not even become active partisans of the Nazis and their ideology. Well-known examples of this are the philosopher Martin Heidegger, the social scientist Werner Sombart, the writer Gottfried Benn, the actors Heinrich George and Gustav Gründgens and the composer Richard Strauss. A so-called "Pledge of Allegiance of German Poets to the People's Chancellor Adolf Hitler" was signed by 88 writers. Tens of thousands of teachers, doctors, lawyers, university lecturers and members of the technical intelligentsia joined the NSDAP.

This disastrous step taken by many intellectuals was not only the result of pressure or tempting offers from the fascists, it was not only the result of remaining illusions about the character of fascism or the influence of the fascist frenzy into which the Nazis temporarily plunged considerable sections of the German people, it was also the result of the decades-long influence of the reactionary ideologies of nationalism and anti-democracy and, above all, of anti-communism and anti-Marxism on the German intelligentsia. The attitude of the intelligentsia towards fascism showed how far the great humanist traditions of the German spirit had already decomposed in the age of imperialism, how little the ideals of classical philosophy and literature still applied. As much as it is necessary to differentiate here in detail, the fact remains that in 1933 large sections of the German intelligentsia, contrary to their vital interests and a great intellectual tradition, strengthened the mass base of German fascism with their behaviour and contributed to the stabilization of its system of rule.

Although the question posed at the beginning is therefore understandable, it also reveals the theoretical helplessness of the questioners in the face of the events of the time. It makes the explanation of the events of 1933 a primarily intellectual-historical problem. The illusion to which the questioners are subject, that Germany was previously a country of poets and thinkers, contains in its germ the view of the "exceptional situation" and the "deviation" from the traditional line of the German bourgeoisie, which is still to be found in bourgeois scholarship today and which the period from 1933 to 1945 is supposed to represent. The answers that the bourgeois thinkers of the time came up with to the question they posed themselves were correspondingly different. For the most part, they saw the events in Germany as an inexplicable "relapse into barbarism", an "outbreak of irrational forces", an "uprising of the less civilized against reason and culture", an expression of a latent, ever-present "irrevocable cruelty of man".

In confronting these anthropologizing and psychologizing attempts at explanation, which obscured the real causes instead of revealing them, the collective of theorists of the world communist movement worked out the true nature and the historical, socio-economic and political causes for the establishment of the fascist dictatorship. At the same time, Marxist theorists were working intensively to uncover the intellectual history of fascism. We need only mention Hans Günther's 1935 book "Der Herren eigener Geist" and his articles in "Internationale Literatur", the articles by Georg Lukács and his book "Die Zerstörung der Vernunft", Alexander Abusch's "Der Irrweg einer Nation", Johannes R. Becher's articles "Deutsche Lehre" and "Deutsche Sendung" and his lecture "Zur Frage der politisch-moralischen Vernichtung des Faschismus" or Walter Wolf's work "Kritik der Unvernunft", which was written in the Buchenwald concentration camp.¹

These and other works have proven that the barbaric ideology of fascism, the so-called National Socialist world view, was able to find a foothold because it had been preceded by a far-reaching, influential and diverse predecessor in Germany. In view of the attempts to whitewash this forerunner, which continue to this day in the FRG, it is always necessary to emphasize this: The humanist spirit of the heyday of classical bourgeois philosophy and literature in Germany had been decomposed, destroyed and turned into its opposite within the mainstream of bourgeois ideology long before Hitler. Hitler's outbursts in

"Mein Kampf" and the wild fantasy of Rosenberg's "Myth of the 20th Century" by no means fell like a bolt from the blue. Like the entire fascist ideology, these machinations did not offer any new ideas in terms of content. They borrowed their guiding ideas from existing reactionary ideologies. The fascists were able to adopt these ideologies because their general social and political foundations were the same as those of fascism itself: the domination of monopoly capital and the turn it caused from democracy to political reaction, its urge for domination, expansion, violence and war of conquest.

Since the end of the last century, a particularly reactionary, anti-democratic and anti-humanist ideology had developed in Germany as a spiritual reflex of a rapidly developing and particularly aggressive and rapacious imperialism. This newly forming ideology of German monopoly capital drew essential elements from the Junker-Prussian spirit of militarism and the glorification of war, the worship of the authoritarian state and power politics, hostility to progress, aristocratic arrogance and contempt for the people, which had permeated every pore of social life in Germany under Prussian domination since the unification of the Reich in 1871. On the basis of the alliance between monopoly capital and Junkerism, the traditions of Prussian-German militarism merged with the newly developed forms of imperialist ideology. Unbridled nationalism and chauvinism, racism and geopolitics, the cult of the Germans and the Germanism of "völkisch" associations, the theories of a "place in the sun" that had to be conquered, of the "German essence" that was supposed to make the world a better place, The propaganda of the All-Germans, the Colonial Society and the Fleet Association spread the idea of a special "German mission" and justified the striving of German monopoly capital for expansion and the warlike redivision of the world. Just how broad the impact of this ideology was can be seen in the chauvinist frenzy at the outbreak of the First World War.

¹ Hans Günther, *Der Herren eigener Geist. Die Ideologie des Nationalsozialismus*, Moscow/Leningrad 1935; the same, *Der Fall Nietzsche*, in: *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus*, Moscow/Leningrad, 5-6/1935, p. 539 ff.; Georg Lukács, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft. Der Weg des Irrationalismus von Schelling zu Hitler*, Berlin 1955; the same, *Schicksalswende. Beiträge zu einer neuen deutschen Ideologie*, Berlin 1948, esp. pp. 5-36, pp. 37-67, pp. 68-94; Alexander Abusch, *Der Irrweg einer Nation. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis deutscher Geschichte*, Berlin 1947; Johannes R. Becher, *Deutsche Lehre*, in: *Internationale Literatur. Deutsche Blätter*, Moscow 4/1943, p. 13 ff.; the same, *Deutsche Sendung. Ein Ruf an die deutsche Nation*, Moscow 1943; the same, *Zur Frage der politisch-moralischen Vernichtung des Faschismus*, in: *Die Weltbühne*, 16-18/1961; 20/1961; 21/1961; Walter Wolf, *Kritik der Unvernunft. On the analysis of National Socialist pseudo-philosophy*, Weimar 1947.

After the failure of the first attempt to conquer supremacy in the world, this ideology was supplemented and continued by revanchism, by the stab-in-the-back legend, by the literary glorification of the "front experience", by demagogic propaganda against Versailles and against the so-called policy of fulfillment. The nationalist ideology was always coupled with anti-democratism and anti-liberalism, with the rejection of democratic rights and freedoms for the masses, with hostility to every democratic and revolutionary movement, especially the revolutionary workers' movement and Marxism. Expressions of this ideology repeatedly appeared with a romanticizing, demagogic anti-capitalism, increasingly also with the slogan of a "revolution from the right" or a "conservative revolution". Since the Great Socialist October Revolution, the emergence of the first socialist state and the communist world movement, anti-communism and anti-Sovietism have become basic tenets of this ideology.

Of course, the line of development outlined above is not the only one within the extremely diverse bourgeois ideology in the 20th century, but it is the one that most succinctly expressed the new ideological needs of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

[282] This also applies analogously to a certain line of development within bourgeois philosophy. The ideology of German imperialism briefly outlined above has necessary philosophical-ideological and methodological preconditions and foundations, some of which were created beforehand, some of which were created parallel to it and in interaction with it and on the same class basis, also in the course of the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century. Generally speaking, this took place within the reactionary philosophical line of irrationalist renunciation of the great traditions of the bourgeois ascendant period, especially those of the Enlightenment and classical bourgeois philosophy and literature in Germany. The beginnings of this line go back to the philosophical reactions to the French bourgeois revolution and the revolutionary uprisings in the first half of the 19th century with the late Schelling and Arthur Schopenhauer; it was continued by, among others Eduard von Hartmann, Friedrich Nietzsche, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Oswald Spengler, Ludwig Klages, Ernst Jünger, Othmar Spann, Martin Heidegger, Alfred Bäumler and Ernst Krieck; it led to Rosenberg's "Myth of the 20th Century" without ending there, as the development after the Second World War shows.

A nodal point in this development, prototypical for many of its fundamental tendencies, is the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. It is not possible to give a comprehensive assessment and critique of this philosophy within the framework given here; nor can we go into Nietzsche's biography and the development of his views in various periods of his work. We must limit ourselves to a few essential aspects of his thought that are important for understanding his after-effects in fascism.² To avoid possible misunderstandings right away: we are by no means identifying Nietzsche with the fascists. This is inadmissible not only because of the difference that exists between reactionary, anti-human philosophical ideas and the practice of fascism.

² We refer here above all to the detailed account by S. F. Odujev, *Auf den Spuren Zarathustras. Der Einfluß Nietzsches auf die bürgerliche deutsche Philosophie*, Berlin 1977 - In addition to the works by Hans Günther, Georg Lukács and Johannes R. Becher already cited, we also recommend: Otto Grotewohl, *Die geistige Situation der Gegenwart und der Marxismus. Rede auf dem 1. Kulturtag der SED vom 5. bis 7. Mai 1948*, in: Grotewohl, *Deutsche Kulturpolitik*, Dresden 1952, p. 1 ff.; Wolfgang Heise, *Aufbruch in die Illusion. Zur Kritik der bürgerlichen Philosophie in Deutschland*, Berlin 1964, esp. p. 139 ff., p. 158 f., p. 188 ff., p. 366 f., p. 459 ff.; the same, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Werke in drei Bänden*, in: *DZfPh*, 4/1958, p. 653 ff.; Bernhard Kaufhold, *Zur Nietzsche-Rezeption in der westdeutschen Philosophie der Nachkriegszeit*, in: *Beiträge zur Kritik der gegenwärtigen bürgerlichen Geschichtsphilosophie*, ed. von Robert Schulz, Berlin 1958, p. 279 ff.; Franz Mehring, [Über Nietzsche], in: Mehring, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 13: *Philosophische Aufsätze*, Berlin 1961, p. 159 ff.; Georg Mende, *Gespräch*, in: *Urania-Universum*, vol. 11, Leipzig/Jena/Berlin 1965, p. 389 ff.; Theodor Schwarz, *Sein, Mensch und Gesellschaft im Existentialismus*, mit zwei Arbeiten über Schopenhauer und Nietzsche, Frankfurt a. M. 1973, p. 43 ff.; *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von 1830 bis zum Ausgang des 19. Jahrhunderts*, von einem Autorenkollektiv unter Leitung u. Gesamtbear. von Kurt Böttcher, 2. Hbd, in collaboration with Paul Günter Krohn and Peter Wruck, Berlin 1975, p. 731 f., p. 922 ff.; A. S. Bogomolov, *Nemeckaja buržuaznaja filosofija posle 1865 goda*, Moscow 1969, p. 109 ff.; S. F. Odujev, *Reakcionnaja suibnost' ničëanstva*, Moscow 1959.

of bloody terror and millions of crimes. [283] Nor is it only a question of the gap in the cultural-spiritual level between Nietzsche and a Hitler or Rosenberg. We also have to consider all the differences in the content of Nietzsche's views compared to the so-called "National Socialist world view". There was much in his internally extremely contradictory philosophy that was directly opposed to the views of the fascists. Just to hint at this here: He was not a racist in the true sense of the word, he repeatedly opposed the anti-Semitism of his time, nor was he, apart from the beginnings, a narrow-minded Prussian-German nationalist; on the contrary, he was fiercely critical of the Germans and their culture. It can also be assumed that, had he lived through them, he would not have seen in Hitler, Göring and Goebbels the "new masters of the earth", the "supermen" he expected and for whom he wrote, whom he wanted to help "breed" with his philosophy. Georg Lukács wrote explicitly in 1943 about the relationship between German fascism and Nietzsche: "It goes without saying that Nietzsche's teaching is not identical with the official ideology of Hitlerism. It cannot be, if only because Nietzsche ceased to think on the eve of imperialism: for him, the age of imperialist barbarism is still a dream of the future, while fascist ideology emerged as the repulsive rotten product of unfolded imperialism."³

However, we see Nietzsche as one of the most important intellectual forerunners and pioneers of the philosophy and ideology of imperialism, including the fascist ideology in Germany. Of course, this is not the result of a "Germanic spirit" that existed only in the imagination of Nazi ideologues, which allegedly inspired Nietzsche and his successors, but rather the class character of his philosophy. Nietzsche's philosophical view of the world and history, his view of human knowledge, his moral doctrine and even his aesthetics have a clear class meaning. They arise from a position on the most important social processes of his time, conditioned by reactionary class interests.

Friedrich Nietzsche developed his philosophical ideas in the 70s and 80s of the last century. This was the period in which capitalism began to grow into its monopolistic stage, the epoch that Lenin characterized as "the epoch of the full domination and decline of the bourgeoisie, the epoch of the transition from the progressive bourgeoisie to reactionary and arch-reactionary finance capital"⁴.

In his analysis of imperialism, Lenin worked out the consequences of the replacement of free competition by the economic rule of the monopolies for the politics of the bourgeoisie: the urge to unrestricted rule, to violence, terror, expansion, aggression and war, the "negation" of democracy⁵, "reaction all along the line, no matter under what political system", the "extreme intensification of antagonisms in this field as well"⁶. "The political superstructure above the new economics, above monopolistic capitalism," Lenin writes, "is the turn from democracy [284] to political reaction."⁷ The full implications of these observations can be seen precisely in the fascist dictatorships of our age, which in their essence can only be understood on the basis of Lenin's analysis of imperialism. His investigations led Lenin to the conclusion that imperialism is parasitic, rotting and dying capitalism⁸, the highest stage of capitalism, the eve of the socialist revolution.⁹

All of this had serious consequences for the world view and philosophy. The turn towards reaction took place in the field of politics and political ideology. On the changed social basis, in view of the extraordinary intensification

³ Georg Lukács, German Fascism and Nietzsche, in: Schicksalswende. Contributions to a New German Ideology, Berlin 1948, p. 35 f.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, Unter fremder Flagge, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 21, Berlin 1960, p. 135.

⁵ The same author, Über eine Karikatur auf den Marxismus, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 23, Berlin 1957, p. 34.

⁶ The same author, Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 22, Berlin 1960, p. 302.

⁷ The same, 'On a Caricature...' in: Lenin, Works, vol. 23, p. 34.

⁸ The same author, Imperialism and the Division of Socialism, in: Lenin, Werke, Vol. 23, p. 102.

⁹ The same, 'Imperialism as the highest stage ... ' in: Lenin, Works, vol. 22, p. 191.

The social contradictions and social struggles gave rise to new, very complex ideological needs of the bourgeoisie. They arose from the requirements of the philosophical-theoretical justification of its class rule and its adventurous, expansive foreign policy, from the striving for ideological domination and reactionary mobilization of the politically ever more active and conscious masses of the people, and at the same time from the requirements of the struggle against the revolutionary theory of the working class. To fulfill these needs, traditional philosophical thought proved to be increasingly unsuitable, and in some cases downright obstructive. A growing number of bourgeois philosophers therefore openly turned away from the intellectual achievements of the bourgeois ascendancy, turning to avowed irrationalism, anti-humanism and moral nihilism, historical-philosophical pessimism and similar tendencies. The "world view" of fascism emerged precisely as the vulgarizing and sharpening summary of this "life-philosophical" irrationalism and anti-humanism.

In Nietzsche's philosophy we have before us the first massive breakthrough of the new tendencies in bourgeois philosophy, anticipating and setting in motion many things. His "Umwertung der Werte" is probably the most decisive, comprehensive and nationally and internationally influential manifestation of the late bourgeois break with the great traditions and ideals of the ascendant phase of his own class. He did indeed, as he himself said, philosophize with a hammer against the law tables of previous philosophy and morality.

If one were to briefly outline some of the main directions of the turn that Nietzsche - not always the first, but more radical than all his predecessors - took towards classical bourgeois philosophy, the following should be pointed out above all:

He performed the turnaround

- from a rational approach to questions of worldview and epistemology to open irrationalism, to the degradation of understanding, reason and science;
- from the pursuit of the rational dissolution of traditional religious myths to the creation of new myths such as those of the "will to power", the "eternal return of the same" and the "Superhumans";
- from the optimism and certainty of the future in the conception of history, which centered on the idea of progress, to a profound pessimism regarding history and the prospects of mankind; [285]
- from cognitive optimism to a radical agnosticism, relativism and fictionalism, to the devaluation of knowledge in favor of irrational "life";
- from the optimistic and humanistic view of man, which was based on the high esteem of man and his spirit, to contempt for the masses of people, to the view of man as a creature and animal;
- from a sense of moral obligation towards people and humanity to cynical amorality and nihilism, to the cult of violence, strength and cruelty.

The class-based meaning of this phrase was unequivocally expressed by Nietzsche himself: "I am writing for a species of human beings that does not yet exist: for the masters of the earth."¹⁰ In the last period of his work, Nietzsche understood his thinking as an attempt to establish a philosophy for future "masters of the earth". While the ideologues of the rising bourgeoisie - with a certain justification in their day - presented themselves with the grand humanistic claim of defending the interests of all mankind, while their world view was borne by the pathos of freedom, equality and brotherhood of all people, Nietzsche openly defended the interests of a small minority, their unrestricted claim to dominion, their alleged right to exploit, oppress and enslave the wider world.

¹⁰ Nietzsches Werke (Großoktavausgabe), Leipzig 1905 ff., Vol. XVI, p. 340 - In the following, the Roman volume and Arabic page numbers are quoted from this edition. The spelling has been brought closer to that of today.

masses. He explicitly affirmed and justified private property, the "owner's instinct", the "desire to have and to have more", competition, colonialism, expansionism and aggression, and sang the praises of war. The existence of forced labor, hardship, misery and lawlessness of the working masses seemed to him to be necessary and unalterable because it was supposedly inherent in the nature of life itself. To the extent that Nietzsche commented on general ideological or natural philosophical questions, he mainly pursued the goal of consecrating the social facts of the "hierarchy", the caste division between "master race" and the masses, oppression, exploitation and war as cosmologically and biologically justified and therefore unchangeable. His basic metaphysical principle of the "will to power" ultimately had no other meaning. In all of this, Nietzsche's philosophy corresponded to the fundamental ideological requirements of the emerging imperialist age.

Nietzsche's anticipatory achievement was made possible by his extraordinary sensitivity for what was of the moment, his intuition for new, often still latent social developments and their ideological requirements. Because of these abilities, he has often been compared to a seismograph.

In his own way, Nietzsche recognized the crisis and fragility of the bourgeois order and the general decline of bourgeois culture earlier than other bourgeois thinkers. He rightly considered the external splendor of the newly created German Empire to be of little value and the feeling of "secularity" and the belief in unlimited capitalist progress to be illusory. Unlike the liberal ideologues, he clearly saw how hollow and hypocritical the traditional ideas, values and ideals in philosophy, religion and morality had become and how blatantly at odds they were with capitalist practice. Nietzsche saw in the 80s

[286] in all areas of social life, in all areas of the intellectual culture of his time, flattening and decline, "decadence", he noted the "devaluation" of the hitherto valid supreme values ("God is dead!")¹¹, the advance of pessimism and skepticism, the "rise of nihilism"¹².

Of course, Nietzsche's insights were not based on knowledge of the determining socio-economic correlations and laws of the developments he observed. His thinking moved in the sphere of ideas and social feelings, and he erroneously sought explanations for the processes in this sphere in biology, physiology and psychology, in the formulas of "degenerescence", "degeneration" and "disease", the "decline of the will" and the "decay and atrophy of the instincts" borrowed from there.

Nietzsche's pessimistic view of his time was summarized for him in the fear: "Our whole European culture has long been moving with an ordeal of tension that grows from decade to decade, as if heading for a catastrophe: restless, violent, precipitous: like a stream that wants to *reach its end*."¹³ He spoke of the fact that today "everything is shaking", that "all the earth is trembling"¹⁴ For him, his time was the "time of a great inner decay and disintegration"¹⁵.

Behind this mood - taking into account all the personal reasons Nietzsche could have for this feeling of decline and end as well as for his hatred of his time, which ignored him - is ultimately the fear of the uprising of the masses, of the revolution of the working class. The core of all his accusations against his time was that the masses would advance everywhere, that their virtues, their standards and values would become dominant, that the "spirit of the herd", as he said, would triumph. Nietzsche was the first to coin the term "age of the masses"¹⁶, even before the theories of Le Bon or Sighele disparaging the masses emerged. Thus

¹¹ Vol. V, p. 163 f.; p. 271 f. and more.

¹² Vol. XV, p. 137.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Vol. VI, p. 439.

¹⁵ Vol. XV, p. 188.

¹⁶ Vol. VII, p. 205.

he expressed his disgust at the growing historical activity, consciousness and organization of the masses, especially the working class, at the bourgeois-democratic rights and freedoms they had fought for, at their growing role in all areas of social life and above all in politics. This disgust and hatred were behind his complaints about leveling and "mediocrity", about the decline of the "hierarchy". One thing above all was certain for him: under no circumstances should the "order of rank", the "caste order", which in his eyes was natural and determined by life itself, be overturned; under no circumstances should the masses, the "lowest layers of clay and loam of society"¹⁷, be allowed to conquer power or even influence politics. According to Nietzsche, a "declaration of war by the *higher people* ... to the masses" is necessary.¹⁸

His philosophy is this declaration of war. Throughout his entire oeuvre, there is undisguised hatred of the masses, whom he insulted as the "far too many", the "bad offspring", the "herd animals", the "rabble", the "canaille", the "diminished", the "cared for" and the "poisoned". It is pure hypocrisy when the fascist ideologues tried to keep their distance from these outbursts by Nietzsche - as well as from his praise of the "blond beast" and the "great criminal" - when they talked about the "people", the "national community" and "Germanic democracy". Their practice and real conviction corresponded only too closely to the contempt for the masses and thus contempt for humanity as articulated by Nietzsche.

In Nietzsche's eyes, the self-liberation of the masses was tantamount to the demise of culture. From the very beginning, his basic socio-political dogma was "*that slavery belongs to the essence of a culture*"¹⁹, as it was his lifelong nightmare: "There is nothing more frightening than a barbaric slave state that has learned to regard its existence as an injustice and is preparing to take revenge not only for itself, but for all generations."²⁰

Both thoughts were already formulated at the beginning of Nietzsche's philosophical activity in 1870/71 and are directly related to the world-historical event of the first temporary establishment of a workers' power in Paris in 1871. Shortly after the bloody suppression of the Paris Commune, the budding philosopher expressed his class's fear of the new political force in a letter to a friend in the following sentences: "Beyond the struggle of nations, we were frightened by that international hydra-head which suddenly appeared so fearfully, as an indicator of quite different future struggles."²¹ And in a note from the 1880s, it says: "... the next century will be thoroughly shocked here and there.

'rumbling', and the Paris Commune, which also has its defenders and advocates in Germany, was perhaps only a slight indigestion of what was to come."²²

Hence Nietzsche's furious hatred of the ossifying revolutionary workers' movement and of socialism, which repeatedly erupted in insults. This is precisely why he said: "The stupidity, basically the degeneration of instinct, which is the cause of *all* stupidity today, lies in the fact that there is a workers' question. *One does not ask* about certain things: the first imperative of instinct. - I do not at all see what one wants to do with the European worker after one has made a question of him. He is far too well off not to ask more questions step by step, to ask more indiscriminately."²³ In Nietzsche's opinion, a "modest and self-sufficient kind of man", a "type of Chinese" should have been educated to become the status quo.

In his subjectivist view of historical events, the fact that this did not happen was the fault of the ruling class itself. Nietzsche was fiercely critical of the ruling class of his time.

¹⁷ Vol. I, p. 367.

¹⁸ Vol. XVI, p. 279.

¹⁹ Vol. IX, p. 151.

²⁰ Vol. I, p. 127.

²¹ Letter to Carl von Gersdorf dated June 21, 1871, quoted from Friedrich Nietzsche, Werke in drei Bänden, ed. by Karl Schlechta, vol. 3, Munich, no year, p. 1042 f.

²³ Vol. VIII, p. 153.

²² Vol. XV, p. 232.

²³ Vol. VIII, p.
153.

He criticized the liberal bourgeoisie in general and the national liberals in Germany in particular, the German Empire and its creator Bismarck. He also turned against certain aspects of capitalist development with various romanticizing arguments, against the utilitarianism of "industrial culture", against the private "money trade", against the "great fortunes" [288] and the "homeless money settlers".²⁴ Because of this attitude and the aforementioned criticism of bourgeois culture, the essence of Nietzsche's philosophy - like that of the fascist movements - has often been interpreted in terms of rebelliousness, a fundamental opposition to the bourgeoisie and capitalist society. Attempts have even been made to make Nietzsche the direct antithesis of all those developments that led to fascism.²⁵ It is therefore important to always bear in mind the social content of Nietzsche's critique of capitalism, the bourgeoisie and certain aspects of its ideology. It is essentially the same as the demagogic anti-capitalism of the subsequent conservative and fascist ideologues that followed Nietzsche: it is a critique from the right, from reactionary positions, of the vices [Gebre- chen] of capitalism of free competition and of its liberal ideology. Nietzsche's critique was by no means directed against the decisive socio-economic foundations of the capitalist exploitative order, which, as already noted, he expressly affirmed and defended.

In Nietzsche's eyes, the "rotten ruling classes ... had corrupted the image of the ruler".²⁶ He noticed in the bourgeoisie of his time a "manufacturer's vulgarity", a "lack of noble form", the absence of all those "forms and insignia of the *higher race* which first make *people* interesting".²⁷ Nietzsche criticized the rulers for proving themselves too little legitimized by a "pathos of distance" to command and rule, for being too liberal, too tolerant, too democratic, too little dictatorial. For example, they should not have introduced universal conscription, universal suffrage, the right of association and "universal education", because "if you want slaves, you are a fool if you educate them to be masters".²⁸ Through all this, the rulers had allowed and promoted the strengthening of the democratic and workers' movement.

Nietzsche transferred the rejection of his time to the consideration of almost the entire history of human culture, insofar as he believed he could recognize in it the historical roots of the calamity of the present. In a direct reversal of all philosophical concepts of progress, he basically only accepted the barbaric early times of the peoples; after that, in his eyes, the general decline set in, which was only interrupted for a few moments by the emergence of great men such as Caesar, Cesare Borgia or Napoleon. Moreover, the history of mankind was dominated by disastrous spiritual developments, which were borne by the resentment of the "herdsmen" towards the "nobles", the "nobles", the "lords".

[289] Among these he counted no less than the greater part of the history of philosophy and morality since Socrates, the Jewish religion and the Christianity that emerged from it with its morality of humility and compassion, with its doctrine of the equality of souls before God as the alleged root of all later ideas of equality, the Reformation, almost the entire Enlightenment and bourgeois humanism, but above all Rousseau's democratic ideas, the French Revolution with its slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity and socialism.

²⁴ See vol. III, p. 348; vol. IX, p. 161.

²⁵ Walter Kaufmann, for example, wrote: "In the entire history of German literature, no other voice has risen with such prophetic verve and devastating sarcasm against the very tendencies that later culminated in National Socialism. Neither Lessing and Schiller nor Goethe and Heine even came close to Nietzsche's dazzling indignation or the caustic irony of his mockery of nationalism and idolatry of the state, anti-Semitism, militarism and cultural barbarism and all the other festering vices to which he opposed his ideal of the 'good European'" (Walter Kaufmann, Jaspers' *Beziehung zu Nietzsche*, in: *Philosophen des 20. Karl Jaspers*, ed. by Paul Arthur Schilp, Stuttgart 1957, p. 419 f.).

²⁶ Vol. XVI, p. 194.

²⁷ Vol. V, p. 77.

²⁸ Vol. VIII, p. 153.

All of these "lies of two thousand years", which he declared war on, were supposedly the "vernein- nations of life itself", they led to the effeminization and hardening of the animal that Nietzsche portrayed man as, to his degeneration, they turned him into a sick and weak animal unfit for life. Blinded by delusions of grandeur, Nietzsche believed that the mission of his "philosophy of the future" was to end humanity's previous aberration and to bring about a world-historical turning point towards a new age, towards the worldwide domination of a completely new human species, the "superman".

From his negative view of human history and the society of his time, Nietzsche formulated his epochal problem for the 20th century: "*Who shall be master of the earth?*"²⁹ He described this question as the refrain of his practical philosophy, and indeed it was. His ideological thinking, at least in the last phase of his work, revolved essentially around the problem of domination and power, of conquering power, exercising power and securing power for a small elite, to such an extent that he ultimately elevated the principle of the will to power to the essence of life itself, to the metaphysical universal principle for the explanation of all phenomena in nature, society and thought.

Nietzsche read from the obvious tendencies of the development of the productive forces of world trade and world transport, colonial policy and the incipient imperialist world politics of his time that the world was increasingly growing together into a whole, that the problem of domination therefore had to be posed globally, on a world scale. For this reason, the nationalism of the European "fatherlands", which prevented the Europe called to rule from acquiring "a will" and forming a new ruling caste, must inevitably have seemed petty and contemptible to him.

The "masters of the earth" expected by Nietzsche were to be a terrible new "master race", a new kind of "leaders", of "philosophers and commanders"³⁰, against whom all previous fearsomeness was dwarfed.³¹ In the image of these "new masters", Nietzsche combined the opposing characteristics of high self-discipline and intellectual culture with an unbridled will to power and ruthless harshness, cruelty and licentiousness. This contradictory connection is expressed in an exaggerated form in an aphorism from the "Genealogy of Morals" of 1887, which uses the historical example of the behavior of the barbarians of earlier times as a model for the expected "barbarians of the 20th century". It says of these people that

"so inventive in their behavior towards each other in consideration, self-control, tenderness, loyalty, pride and friendship, - they are not much better outwardly, where the strange, *the* foreign begins, than unleashed predators. They enjoy there the [290] freedom from all social compulsion, they hold themselves harmless in the wilderness for the tension which a long confinement and enclosure in the peace of the community gives, they step *back* into the innocence of the predator's conscience, as rejoicing monsters, who perhaps walk away from a hideous succession of murder, burning, desecration and torture with an exuberance and spiritual equanimity, as if only a student prank had been accomplished, convinced that the poets will have something to sing and praise for a long time to come. At the bottom of all these noble races is the predator, the magnificent *blond beast* lusting after prey and victory."³² The "supermen" should learn to understand themselves as the goal and supreme purpose of human history, as the "meaning of the earth"³³ and therefore accept with good conscience the sacrifice of a myriad of people "who for *their sake* must be pressed down and diminished to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to tools"³⁴.

Nietzsche called for the creation of a "new responsibility", "that of the physician, for all cases in which the highest interest of life, of the *ascending* life, requires the most ruthless suppression and destruction.

²⁹ Vol. XII, p. 406.

³⁴ Vol. VII, p. 236
f.

³⁰ Vol. VII, p. 138.

³¹ Vol. XVI, p. 340 f.

³² Vol. VII, p. 321 f.

³³ Vol. VI, p. 13.

³⁴ Vol. VII, p. 236
f.

The pushing aside of *degenerate* life".³⁵ He formulated the first sentence of his "love of mankind" as follows: "The weak and the degenerate should perish ... And they should be helped to do so"³⁶ ; he called on us to gain that "tremendous *energy of greatness* in order to shape the future human being by breeding and, on the other hand, by destroying millions of degenerates, and *not* to perish from the suffering that we *create* and whose equal has never yet existed!"³⁷ Nowhere in the entire philosophical literature are there such openly barbaric demands: The SS murderers were able to see instructions for action in this, they were able to take the "blonde beast" as a role model!

In Nietzsche's time, the "new masters of the earth", as he wished them to be, did not yet exist, and so he saw their formation, their breeding, as the most important task of the approaching 20th century. He asked about the conditions under which they could emerge and, above all, envisioned a life of struggle, war, adventure and danger, full of resistance to be overcome. In this respect, Nietzsche's hopes were directed towards the 20th century. He saw a time of great wars and revolutions approaching with a prophetic eye. He expected deep social upheavals, revolutionary unrest, terrorist forms of rule, an "age of tremendous wars, upheavals, explosions"³⁸ , the transition to "great politics".

"The time for small politics is over," he wrote, "the next century will bring the struggle for dominance of the earth - the *compulsion* for big politics."³⁹ The "great policy" was undoubtedly nothing other than the imperialist world power policy that was already emerging at the time. Nietzsche also counted a fundamental [291] rethinking and relearning in all questions of worldview, morality and politics, the shattering of the "old tables", the "revaluation of all values" as the most important conditions for the emergence of the new supermen. This is where Nietzsche saw the function of his philosophy, hence his fight against traditional morality and religion, his new values, his "immoralism", his glorification of strength, violence, cruelty and crime. Nietzsche brought about a radical break with the humanistic ideas of the emerging bourgeoisie in order to create a completely new world view for the "new masters of the earth" that he hoped would give them a "good conscience".

In the last period of his work, this task permeated and determined his world view, his conception of man and history, his epistemology, moral theory and aesthetics. The extreme subjectivism, irrationalism and voluntarism of his re-evaluation of previous values arose entirely from the illusionary objective, directed against historical lawfulness, of justifying the claim to power for a tiny number of selected "supermen" in a world view.

Insofar as Nietzsche took a position on general worldview or natural philosophical questions, this was in line with this task. The central category of Nietzsche's philosophy for describing natural and social events was the term "life". He understood life as an irrational, "Dionysian" power governed by drive, instinct and will, in a state of incessant becoming, growth and decay, contradictory, cruel, unrecognizable, "dark, driving, insatiably self-desiring power"⁴⁰ . Nietzsche elevated social characteristics of class society such as oppression and exploitation, hardship, war, violence, fraud, vice and crime to unavoidable attributes of every life, which could only disappear with it, and thus gave them an alleged immutability based in the essence of reality itself: "Life itself is *essentially* appropriation, violation, overpowering of the alien and the weaker, oppression, harshness, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation and at the very least, mildest exploitation."⁴¹

³⁵ Vol. VIII, p. 143 f.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 218.

³⁷ Vol. XVI, p. 343.

³⁸ Vol. XV, p. 235.

³⁹ Vol. VII, p. 156.

⁴¹ Vol. VII, p. 237 f.

⁴⁰ Vol. I, p. 308.

⁴¹ Vol. VII, p. 237
f.

From the beginning of the 1980s, Nietzsche equated "life" with the "will to power", which now functioned as a kind of metaphysical universal principle for the explanation of the world, as the moving force of human history and the origin of all culture, science, philosophy, religion, morality and art. The terms "life" and "will to power" were deliberately chosen as counterparts to the traditional philosophical categories. Being, matter, substance, thing-in-itself, essence, lawfulness, causality, subject and object, consciousness, knowledge, truth, reason and other philosophical categories were rejected by Nietzsche in the aphorisms of the 1980s as mere fictions that man had devised in order to organize and control the chaos of sensations. In the spirit of subjective idealism, Nietzsche denied the existence of the material world and declared that the "true world" was the world of "phenomena" existing in our imagination. On the other hand, however, he also interpreted the nature of the world objectively and idealistically as the "will to power". For him, the world was then a certain unchangeable quantity of power, a certain sum of quanta of power, an incessantly moving chaos without order, regularity or causality, a play of forces without beginning or end. Nietzsche negated the existence of relative calm and constancy in reality, he absolutized it.

[292] falsely invoking Heraclitus, he turned change into an incessant "becoming" without meaning, direction or goal, which proceeds in repetitive cycles. With the idea of the "eternal return of the same", he turned against the idea of development and progress, which he fiercely opposed. For him, the history of mankind was an "immense workshop of experimentation, where some things succeed, scattered through all time, and unspeakable things fail, where all order, logic, connection and commitment are missing"⁴², it was a "confused heap of garbage"⁴³.

Nietzsche's view of human knowledge was accordingly characterized by a radical irrationalist devaluation of the intellect in relation to "life", the "body", instincts, instincts and the will. For him, all thinking, knowledge, science and logic were merely aids to "life", instruments of the will to power: they served to simplify, logize, schematize and systematize the "confusion of sensations", they were an attempt to fix the becoming, the flowing and, with all of this, a subjective "making right" of things with the aim of dominating them. This meant the negation of any objective truth content of knowledge.

Nietzsche's view of truth was characterized by extreme agnostic relativism, "perspectivism" and pragmatism. According to this, "truths" are created through perspective estimates based on drives and needs; they are illusions, errors, lies and falsifications whose value lies in their "biological usefulness" and whose criterion lies in the "increase of the feeling of power". To this day, Nietzsche's views, his apology of lies as necessary for life, form an epistemological basis for every kind of imperialist demagoguery and misleading of the masses; they were also the basis for Goebbels' propaganda, for the well-known fascist practice of the "big lie", which Hitler cynically professed in "Mein Kampf". In addition, Nietzsche gave countless references in his works to "techniques of domination", to the use of lies as a "supplement to power", under the pretense of exposing deception, hypocrisy, lies and dissimulation in human history.⁴⁴

In his first work, "The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music", he replaced rational, scientific knowledge, which he devalued, with myth. The myth, "the contracted world view", which, "as an abbreviation of appearance, cannot ignore the miracle", was for him the "firm and holy seat of all culture".⁴⁵ With the Zarathustra figure, the myth of the will to power, the eternal return of the same and the superman, Nietzsche himself created examples of new myths. He thus became the founder of a defining tendency in the bourgeois ideology of the imperialist age, the production of

⁴² Vol. XV, p. 204.

⁴³ Vol. X, p. 273.

⁴⁴ Vol. XV, p. 251.

⁴⁵ Vol. X, p. 160.

social myths, which gave rise to such repugnant products as the fascist myths of the "Nordic master race" and the "Jewish counter-race", of "blood and soil".

It is a consequence of Nietzsche's epistemological "perspectivism" that for "masters" and "herd people" each have distinct "truths", especially in worldly and ethical terms. On this basis, Nietzsche rejected the conventional distinction between "good" and "evil", the traditional norms and values of morality. Altruism, humanity, compassion, selflessness, goodness, righteousness, moderation, diligence, modesty, the pursuit of tranquillity, peace and security as well as a sense of guilt were for him expressions of "herd instincts", unnatural "herd virtues", directed against the "strong", the "noble", the "superior", the "poor" and the "bad". "master race", which Nietzsche called "immoralism", the "beyond good and evil", the maxim "Nothing is true. Everything is permitted"⁴⁶, taught the "innocence of the predator's conscience"⁴⁷.

Let us summarize: Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy grew out of the transition from the capitalism of free competition to monopoly capitalism. Franz Mehring already pointed out the connection between this philosophy and the age of cartels and trusts in his "Lessing Legend".⁴⁸ He was the first to determine its class character when he characterized Nietzsche as "the philosopher of big capital"⁴⁹ when he wrote: "Subjectively a desperate delirium of the mind, this so-called philosophy is objectively a glorification of big capitalism, and as such it has found a large audience."⁵⁰ With his teachings, Nietzsche created the prototype for all subsequent reactionary subjectivist-irrationalist philosophies of the imperialist age. His philosophy corresponded - especially in its last phase of development - to the fundamental ideological needs of the bourgeoisie of this age.

Friedrich Nietzsche was in many ways a forerunner and pioneer of fascism and its ideology. He had a direct influence on the fascist leaders and ideologues, who read his works, took the elements that suited them and incorporated them into their own adventurous body of thought. He had a further mediating effect in that the "ten thousand lecturers of the irrational, ... who sprang up like mushrooms all over Germany in his shadow"⁵¹ took up his ideas, reshaped them, developed them further and popularized them so that, transformed in this way, they in turn became part of the fascist body of thought. In this way, he and his successors helped to create a favorable atmosphere in which the fascist ideology itself could find a foothold.

During the years of the Weimar Republic and the fascist dictatorship, Nietzsche's works and the extensive secondary literature about him formed a reading material that made him ripe for the reception of fascist ideas by undermining and destroying the remaining ties to the spirit of humanity, democracy, liberalism, science, classical philosophy and education.

[294] The study of Nietzsche and those who disseminated and passed on his ideas accustomed people to the ideas of harshness, cruelty and violence as supposedly unalterable elements of life; his preaching of immoralism and nihilism was capable of destroying any remaining feelings of responsibility towards humanity. The gas chambers of Maidanek and Auschwitz had one of their historical preconditions in the fact that the doctrine of the "extermination of millions of miserable people"⁵² had previously been proclaimed.

Of course, Nietzsche's ideas did not cause fascism - that would be an exorbitant overestimation of the historical role of philosophical ideas and would be an idealistic view.

⁴⁶ Vol. VI, p. 397 and more.

⁴⁷ Vol. VII, p. 322.

⁴⁸ Franz Mehring, Die Lessing-Legende, in: Mehring, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 9, Berlin 1963, p. 363.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Derselbe, [On Nietzsche], p. 182.

⁵¹ Thomas Mann, Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Our Experience, in: Mann, Gesammelte Werke, vol. 10: Adel des Geistes. Twenty Attempts on the Problem of Humanity, Berlin 1955, p. 671.

⁵² Vol. XVI, p. 343.

of history. Nietzsche's ideas grew on the soil of a rapidly developing "great capitalism" and fanatical hostility to the revolutionary workers' movement; they arose as a militant reaction to the first attempt to establish a workers' power, just as fascism and its crimes grew on the soil of fully developed monopoly capitalism and fanatical hostility to the October Revolution, to Soviet power and the world communist movement.

As already mentioned, the ideology of German fascism took its main content from the preceding and contemporary ideologies of extreme reaction, borrowing it primarily from all the anti-progressive, anti-democratic, anti-humanist and irrationalist ideologies of Prussian-German history. At the same time, the Nazi ideologues, with the aim of providing the fascist ideas with a great intellectual prehistory, also unlawfully invoked elements of the democratic and humanist traditions, such as the ideas of the Peasants' War, the thoughts of Kant, Fichte and Hegel, Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin, which were distorted and falsified for this purpose. The Nazis eclectically fused the various ideological elements they used as intellectual sources, vulgarized them, adapted them to the requirements of their mass propaganda and combined them with an unbridled national and social de- magogy. At the heart of this adventurous surrogate world view was a blindly racist anti-communism and anti-Marxism.

The exploitation and processing of Friedrich Nietzsche's ideas played a special role here. There is no doubt that Hitler's and Mussolini's worship of Nietzsche had a certain significance. Mussolini had already committed himself to Nietzsche at the age of 20. In an article at the time, he wrote: "In order to achieve the ideal that Nietzsche outlines for us, a new kind of free spirit will arise, strengthened in war, in loneliness, in great danger, spirits that will redeem us from charity."⁵³

At that time, Mussolini still called himself a socialist; but he spoke as the "Duce" when he described himself as Nietzsche's most loyal disciple in a speech to the Italian Chamber of Deputies on May 26, 1934.⁵⁴ The Nietzsche Archive in Weimar, founded and supervised by a clique of reactionary philosophers and relatives of Friedrich Nietzsche, who were grouped around his sister Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche and had been working for some time on making Nietzsche's ideas available for the purposes of the fascists [295], honored Mussolini's support for Nietzsche on July 29, 1933 with the following telegram. On July 29, 1933, Mussolini's supporters honored Nietzsche with the following telegram on the Italian fascist leader's 50th birthday: "The Nietzsche Archive sends its warmest congratulations to the most glorious disciple of Zarathustra that Nietzsche dreamed of, the ingenious reawakener of aristocratic values in Nietzsche's spirit, with the deepest veneration and admiration."⁵⁵

Hitler expressed his admiration for Friedrich Nietzsche by visiting the Nietzsche Archive several times - both before and after 1933. He had himself photographed in front of the marble bust of the philosopher, he donated large sums of money for the construction of the Nietzsche Memorial Hall in Weimar and received her brother's sword cane as a gift from Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche during one of his visits.⁵⁶ When Hitler met with Mussolini in Venice in June 1934, a telegram was sent from Weimar to this meeting: "Friedrich Nietzsche's manes hover around the dialog between the two greatest statesmen in Europe."⁵⁷ In August 1943, Hitler presented Mussolini with a special edition of Nietzsche's works as a gift when he was only able to maintain his power in northern Italy by relying on German bayonets.⁵⁸

⁵³ Conrad Algermissen, *Nietzsche and the Third Reich*, Celle 1947, p. 3.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Nietzsche Archive Weimar, Diary No. 2; Daily notes, (then monthly) from September 21, 1922 to the end of June 1935, p. 227.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 239.

⁵⁸ Algermissen, p. 3 f.

Like Hitler, other Nazi leaders such as Rosenberg, Goebbels, Rust, Frank, Frick and a whole series of foreign fascist leaders also visited the Nietzsche Archive. The Thuringian Nazi prominence, headed by Gauleiter Sauckel, came and went there. In May 1934, the fascist legal philosophers met at the Nietzsche Archive. This event was attended by Frank and Rosenberg Professors Heidegger, Rothacker, Freyer and Binder, among others, took part.⁵⁹

In addition to Hitler's attitude, Alfred Rosenberg's position as the so-called "Führer's representative for the intellectual and ideological training of the NSDAP" played a key role in the fascist reception of Nietzsche. Rosenberg's main philosophical source, however, was Houston Stewart Chamberlain; in his "Myth of the 20th Century" he only occasionally referred to Nietzsche.⁶⁰ Among his colleagues, he regretted that he had gotten to know Nietzsche too late.⁶¹ But it was under his aegis that Nietzsche was dealt with by party officials during the Nazi regime, and in 1944 he gave the speech at the central memorial service in Weimar on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the philosopher's birth. It was Rosenberg who officially placed Nietzsche in the ancestral gallery of German fascism in 1933. In an article in the "Völkischer Beobachter" of December 8, 1933, he wrote: "When National Socialism lists those personalities to whom it can make a vital and direct connection without absolute influences deciding the requirements of the 20th century, it could name the apparent antagonists Nietzsche and Wagner, the great herald Paul de Lagarde and, as a prophet, Houston Stewart Chamberlain. These in particular are very rarely mentioned."⁶²

[296] The latter changed radically in the years of the fascist dictatorship. There was a veritable flood of publications on Nietzsche, in which he was reworked for the ideological needs of the fascist dictatorship. Among the authors there were certainly also those who wanted to use their omissions about Nietzsche as a means of ingratiating themselves with the brown rulers.⁶³ At the heart of this literature was the endeavour to prove Nietzsche as the forerunner of national socialism, the "Thousand Year Reich" as the fulfillment of his intentions that had finally begun. To this end, everything in Nietzsche that could be used in the interests of the fascists was pulled out. At the same time, however, Nietzsche was not allowed to appear as too great a thinker, for example greater than the infallible "Führer", and not already as a "finished" National Socialist, and so "time-related limitations" and "errors" were also identified in Nietzsche, because of which he needed corrections and additions. There was even a small faction of fascist ideologues, such as Ernst Krieck and Christoph Steding, who particularly emphasized the contrasts between Nietzsche and fascist ideology.⁶⁴ In addition, individual books were occasionally allowed to appear, such as that of the existential philosopher Karl Jaspers, who treated Nietzsche "in himself", so to speak, without reference to the fascist regime.⁶⁵

The most important figure among the crowd of fascist Nietzsche interpreters was the philosopher Alfred Bäumler, professor of political education at Berlin University since 1933, who was actively involved in the macabre spectacle of the book burning on May 10, 1933, especially with his book

"Nietzsche, the Philosopher and Politician" from 1931, he provided many of the keywords and guidelines for later interpretations of the philosopher. Bäumler stylized Nietzsche's philosophy into a

"heroic realism" and "Germanism"; he turned Nietzsche into a Nordic victor,⁶⁶ that of the Oriental-Roman-Christian and humanistic and rational-scientific

⁵⁹ Nietzsche Archive Weimar, Diary No. 2, p. 236.

⁶⁰ See Odujew, Auf den Spuren Zarathustras, p. 211.

⁶¹ Information from Heinrich Härtle, Rosenberg's personal secretary, to Hans Langreder (see Hans Langreder, Die Auseinandersetzung mit Nietzsche im Dritten Reich. A contribution to the history of Nietzsche's impact, phil. Diss., Kiel 1970, S. 62).

⁶² Quoted from *ibid.*

⁶³ See *ibid.*, p. 65 ff.

⁶⁴ See, among others: Ernst Krieck, *Leben als Prinzip der Weltanschauung und Problem der Wissenschaft*, Leipzig 1938; Christoph Steding, *Das Reich und die Krankheit der europäischen Kultur*, Hamburg 1943.

⁶⁵ Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche. Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens*, Berlin/Leipzig 1936.

⁶⁶ Alfred Bäumler, *Nietzsche, the Philosopher and Politician*, Leipzig (1931), p. 103.

tradition of the Occident with a Nordic-pagan-warrior value system. His philosophical achievements were emphasized: his fundamental principle of the will to power, the conception of "life" as incessant struggle and war, his irrationalist conception of reality as an incessant stream of events - erroneously referred to as "her- acclitism" - which denied the existence of relative calm, of "being", causality and lawfulness, his fight against the "philosophy of consciousness", against Cartesianism, the thesis of the primacy of the body over the intellect, his fight against objective truth under the sign of perspectivism, the emphasis on the "innocence of becoming", his turn against morality and responsibility.

The interpretation of Nietzsche as a politician was primarily based on one idea: he had emerged from a

"Germanic" spirit against Judaism and Christianity, against liberalism, democracy and socialism, against the culture and the state of his time, against the "urbanity of the West", against Bismarck's empire and the Germans of his time. His criticism of the Germans was only directed against the influences of the [297] Romano-Christian spirit on them; ultimately, it only served the goal of making them ripe again for the fulfillment of the "old task of our race: the task of being the leader of Europe".⁶⁷ Bäumler did not fail to quote Nietzsche's estate fragment: "May Europe ... soon produce a *great* statesman, and the one who is now, in this small age of plebeian short-sightedness, celebrated as 'the great realist' (meaning Bismarck - H. M.), *stand small*."⁶⁸

In the eyes of the Nazis, the great statesman they hoped for could only be Hitler! Bäumler concluded his book in 1931 with the words: "The German state of the future will not be a continuation of Bismarck's creation, but it will be created from the spirit of Nietzsche and the spirit of the Great War."⁶⁹

In this sense, the subsequent fascist Nietzsche interpreters understood Nietzsche as one of their spiritual forerunners and prophets. Let us take just one of the most important books on this subject, Heinrich Härtle's "Nietzsche and National Socialism", which was published by the NSDAP in 1937. Härtle, Alfred Rosenberg's personal secretary and still working in the spirit of his master in the FRG today, equipped with the reassuring conviction "that only a conscious National Socialist can fully grasp Nietzsche"⁷⁰, set himself the task of "sharply delineating Nietzsche's political world of thought and National Socialism, clarifying their relationship and opposition"⁷¹. In doing so, Nietzsche's still unmeasured fertility, his creative power, which had not been sufficiently appreciated for a long time, was to be made visible beyond "individual confusions and contradictions".⁷²

To this end, Härtle compiled a large number of Nietzsche quotations, so that the result was almost a kind of Nietzsche reading book with explanatory intertexts for Nazi domestic use. The focus was on Nietzsche's socio-political views, while his general philosophical and epistemological views were only briefly touched upon. Härtle's hate-filled attacks against Christianity and the ideas that allegedly emerged from it, such as Rousseau's teachings and the slogans of the French Revolution, liberalism, "egalitarian democracy", parliamentarianism, anarchism and Marxist socialism, met with undivided approval. In this context, Nietzsche's great merit was emphasized as having uncovered the Christian and - through this - the predominantly Jewish origin and background of all these modern "ideas". Härtle boldly claimed: "We owe Nietzsche the realization of the life-threatening Judaization of values in the Nordic-Germanic cultural sphere."⁷³ Nietzsche's achievement in the philosophy of history

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 182.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 173.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 183.

⁷⁰ Heinrich Härtle, Nietzsche and National Socialism, Munich n.d. (4th ed. 1944), p. 10.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷² Ibid., p. 9 f.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 42.

was to have understood world history as the history of the struggle of values, as a struggle between "master morality" and "slave morality" and to have sensed the "great drama of history" behind it: the world struggle of the Nordic race against the Jewish counter-race".⁷⁴

However, he only "suspected" that Nietzsche had not yet been able to rise to the height of [298] national-socialist insight. Härtle could not completely ignore Nietzsche's negative attitude towards the anti-Semitism of his time, as also represented by his sister and her husband, and he was probably also aware that Nietzsche's concept of race was not clearly ethnically defined. Thus, there was restrictive talk of his "time-bound recognition or misrecognition of the race problem"⁷⁵, and a "Lamarckist bias" of Nietzsche was invented, which had caused him to underestimate anti-Semitism⁷⁶. Further discrepancies between Nietzsche and the German fascists with regard to their views on the state, people, nation and democracy were treated in a similar way and presented as Nietzsche's errors due to the times.

However, everything Nietzsche said about the "new masters of the earth", the new leaders and commanders and their breeding and cultivation, about hierarchy and nobility, about the glorification of battle, war, danger and adventure, of strength and toughness, about soldiering, Prussianism and the military state, was again unreservedly approved of. Even Nietzsche's occasional statements against the great fortunes, the money trade and the "homeless money settlers" were interpreted in terms of demagogic "national socialism".⁷⁷ Under the heading of "racial hygiene", Nietzsche's proposals regarding the prevention and eradication of "unworthy life" also met with approval: marriage bans, castration of the sick and criminals and the like. The pinnacle was reached when Härtle, referring to Nietzsche's remarks about a supposedly expected "non-plus-ultra state of the socialists", wrote: "Before Nietzsche's eyes, *the Soviet Jewish Cheka state* emerges from the chaos."⁷⁸

To summarize, Härtle believed that Nietzsche's inner affinity with National Socialism was greater than his effect on it up to that point, that Nietzsche would surpass all intellectual pioneers of National Socialism in terms of future impact. Only the "National Socialist revolution" had created the conditions for Nietzsche's impact: "Perhaps even Nietzsche would have struggled in vain - had not the man from the world war come, the philosopher from the trenches, the thinker and perpetrator: Adolf Hitler."⁷⁹ Härtle concluded his essay with the statement that the "National Socialist future" would "also be Nietzsche's future".⁸⁰

The evaluation of Nietzsche, as presented here, pervaded most fascist interpretations of Nietzsche. They also addressed the question of the extent to which Nietzsche's ideas had been realized in fascist Germany. As early as 1935, a certain Walter Spethmann believed he could state: "The seeds of Nietzsche's legacy have been sown; a large number of the measures Nietzsche called for to elevate the human being and strengthen the race have already been taken: the increase of the national will to fight ...' the elevation of the physiological qualities of the individual members of the people, the re-evaluation in favor of perfection of character instead of the exaggerated intellect, in favor of the fruitful truth instead of the blind urge for knowledge; the selection of a [299] master and leader class, racial hygiene (prohibition for those with hereditary diseases to marry, sterilization law, emasculation of moral and serious criminals, medical protocol for brides and grooms, etc.); but above all, with regard to the social and economic development of the people.); but above all with regard to young people: their liberation from confessional poisoning and the insecurity of fluctuating ecclesiastical moral concepts that are not based on reason,

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 54.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 12.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 50.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 35.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 41.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 168.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

their gathering in unified communities (only one goal: Germany), similar to the religious associations proposed by Nietzsche: not least the physical training, the exclusion of the sick and weak from the higher educational institutions ... The external organization of our nation is also in line with Nietzsche's goals: today we are in the time longed for by Zarathustra, when a people says to itself: I want to be *master* over nations! Our statesmen also know about the necessity of war, the danger, the hardship and the discipline of great suffering: they know that the political mission of the German people cannot be chained to external boundaries."⁸¹

We know how that turned out!

Let us turn to the question of how the bourgeois historiography and historiography of philosophy in the FRG treats Nietzsche's role in connection with the intellectual preparation of fascism in Germany. The literature on Nietzsche has become immense, the number of different interpretations of Nietzsche is legion. We must limit ourselves here to a few remarks.⁸²

The scale of Nietzsche's evaluation has always ranged from the extreme of canonization to condemnation and cursing, and so it is not surprising that we also find very different points of view with regard to our question.⁸³ From the end of the Second World War to the present day, the tendency to ignore or deny Nietzsche's role in paving the way for fascism, to absolve him of all guilt or even to elevate him to the spiritual antithesis of all tendencies leading to fascism has been clearly recognizable. Just as the social roots of fascism were not eliminated in the western zones at the time, there was no real reckoning with the ideology that had prepared the intellectual ground for fascism. As a result, the fascist Nietzsche advocates, led by Alfred Bäumler and Heinrich Härtle, were soon able to publish again.

To the extent that Nietzsche's historical guilt is stated at all in the bourgeois presentations of our problem, it is usually stated in the wrong direction: in his turning away from belief in God, in his anti-Christianity and the immoralism and nihilism that allegedly grew out of it.⁸⁴ The problem is thus shifted to the purely ideological-historical level. This is usually followed by a reduction of the connections to the relationship between Nietzsche and Hitler. This happens in a particularly extreme form when the problem is to be solved by comparing the psyche and personality structure of both. The decisive factors are always

[300] ignores the historical social references, the socio-economic and class foundations of both Nietzsche's philosophy and the ideology and practice of fascism, as well as the Marxist-Leninist literature that has worked out these connections.

A particularly clear example of the tendencies mentioned here is Ernst Sandvoss' book "Hitler and Nietzsche".⁸⁵ On 200 pages, Sandvoss attempts to prove, mostly by comparing texts, that Nietzsche and Hitler were completely similar in their character, psychological characteristics and basic mental attitudes. The list of similarities is long, ranging from pathological self-centeredness, a sense of mission, excessive ambition and vanity, conviction of his own infallibility, self-deprecation, megalomania, personal will to power, resentment of the humiliated and insulted due to failure in his profession, morbid mistrust of the people around them, contempt for humanity, intolerance, a mendacious pathos towards truth and victimhood, an all-or-nothing mentality, a belief in fate and many other things, from the tactics of defaming their opponents and suppressing their own convictions to such peculiarities as their shared fondness for the high mountains and their

⁸¹ Walter Spethmann, *Der Begriff des Herrentums bei Nietzsche*, Berlin 1935, p. 135 f., quoted from Kaufhold, p. 300.

⁸² Again, reference should be made to the accounts by Odujew, *Auf den Spuren Zarathustras*, and Kaufhold.

⁸³ See Kaufhold, p. 304 f.

⁸⁴ As early as 1947 Algermissen.

⁸⁵ Ernst Sandvoss, *Hitler and Nietzsche*, Göttingen 1969.

Aversion to alcohol and tobacco. All this is backed up quite convincingly with countless quotations from Nietzsche, Hitler and those who knew them personally. There is no doubt that the facts cited provide interesting insights into the psyche and mentality of Nietzsche and Hitler. Nevertheless, the book is deeply unsatisfactory: the flaws in the character and psyche of two people are almost elevated to the rank of world-historical causes for the most terrible events of our century. The question of why and under what social conditions personalities such as the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and the politician Adolf Hitler were able to achieve such significance is not even remotely addressed. In other words, the problem is mystified when the pathology of capitalist society in its final phase is explained in terms of the pathology of individuals.

At least Sandvoss at least makes an attempt to prove Nietzsche's after-effects on fascism, albeit with unsuitable means. The vast majority of bourgeois philosophers and historians today ignore or deny this after-effect. It is hard not to be reminded that even the bourgeois humanist Thomas Mann, who revered Nietzsche as his teacher throughout his life, felt compelled "in the light of our experiences" to realize that Nietzsche, "as the most sensitive instrument of expression and registration, anticipated the rising imperialism with his philosophy of power and announced the fascist epoch of the evening ... announced as a trembling needle ... Everything he said in his final over-excitement against morality, humanity, compassion, Christianity and in favor of beautiful nefariousness, war, evil, was unfortunately suited to find its place in the vile ideology of fascism."⁸⁶

The effort to ignore the relationship between Nietzsche and fascism is characteristic, for example, of the influential Nietzsche books by the well-known bourgeois philosophers Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers and Eugen Fink⁸⁷. Behind [301] such endeavors were mainly two closely related interests. On the one hand, fascism was to be stripped of its socio-economic foundations and all historical roots and intellectual sources in German history, including Nietzsche's philosophy, so that it, fascism, could be labeled an anomaly without historical foundations, a unique deviation from the normal course of German history. On the other hand, Nietzsche was rehabilitated in order to be able to use his arsenal of ideas unhindered. The book title "Nietzsche and the End of Emancipation"⁸⁸ expresses a basic intention.

It is precisely in this sense that there has been a considerable increase in the preoccupation with Nietzsche in recent years.⁸⁹ The range of references to Nietzsche today extends from the old and new Nazis and the neo-conservatives to the attempts of modern revisionists to synthesize Marx and Nietzsche.⁹⁰ The Marxist-Leninist historiography of philosophy will continue to be irreconcilable towards all such attempts to revive Nietzsche's ideas, just as it has always treated Nietzsche as a philosophical opponent.

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⁸⁶ Mann, p. 663 f.

⁸⁷ Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche, Vol. 1 and II, Pfullingen 1961; Jaspers; Eugen Fink, Nietzsche's Philosophy, Stuttgart (1960).

⁸⁸ Günter Rohrmoser, Nietzsche and the End of Emancipation, Freiburg (1971). - Rohrmoser's objective is characterized by the sentence: "After the definitive failure of all attempts to abolish alienation through Marxist-led revolutionary action, Nietzsche has gained a topicality that could not have been expected after the experience of fascism" (p. 7).

⁸⁹ The publication of a new critical complete edition of Nietzsche's works, edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, (West) Berlin/New York 1967 ff. and Nietzsche-Studien. Internationales Jahrbuch für die Nietzsche-Forschung, (West) Berlin/New York 1972 ff. ⁹⁰ On the latter attempts, see Odujev, Auf den Spuren Zarathustras, p. 23.

Werner Krause: Fascism and bourgeois political economy

1. Continuity and discontinuity of economic doctrines in fascist Germany

Economic theories in fascist dictatorships have essentially the same functions as economic doctrines in countries of state-monopoly capitalism, in which bourgeois-parliamentary forms of rule exist. "Ultimately, the general task of bourgeois and political economy is still to defend the current form of bourgeois order, state-monopoly capitalism, against serious dangers and shocks and to keep it alive. Today, however, this social task is no longer fulfilled solely through the ideological justification of the capitalist system. In connection with the functioning of state-monopoly capitalism, it has simultaneously become necessary to create scientific management instruments for capitalist economic management. This leads to the conclusion that contemporary bourgeois economics can only fulfill its general social task by performing two functions: an ideological and an economic-political function."¹

The interest of economic policy-makers in capitalist states as well as the representatives of large corporations and monopoly associations in being able to "base their own economic policy decisions on as clear and correct a picture of economic reality as possible" from the point of view of maintaining and expanding their power² exists in every capitalist country, regardless of its specific form of government. Whether this form is the constitutional monarchy, the bourgeois republic or the fascist dictatorship is largely unaffected by economic theory. A look at the history of political economy in Germany confirms this thesis; the economic theories that dominated the field of bourgeois economic theory both in the Hohenzollern era and the Weimar Republic as well as during the period of fascist rule were characterized by a certain continuity.

This statement is made with reservations and not without qualification, because the political situation leaves its particular mark on the way economic teaching is organized. If the discussion of economic-theoretical problems in textbooks and specialist organs also leaves a certain amount of leeway for a specialist discussion [304] that is independent of the political issues of the day, then economic theories as a whole cannot, of course, remain unrelated to the political situation in which they are created and disseminated.

The reactionary political movement that fascism represents has its basis in a particularly aggressive state-monopoly capitalism, and the economic doctrines that emerge or revive in fascist states reveal the special character of this basis, regardless of the continuity mentioned above. In fascist states, state-monopoly regimentation and regulation of the economy are particularly pronounced, which is reflected in the economic theories.

The methods of domination used by the most aggressive part of monopoly capital in these countries also give economic theories an additional character that differs to a certain extent from economic doctrines that are part of the prevailing academic doctrine in states of bourgeois democracy. In addition to their economic policy function, economic theories also fulfill an ideological function. Fascist ideologues seek to combine conventional economic interests with a basic political attitude that corresponds to the specific interests of the most reactionary groups of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

¹ Herbert Meißner, Die Funktionen der bürgerlichen politischen Ökonomie im staatsmonopolistischen Kapitalismus, in: Bürgerliche Ökonomie ohne Perspektive, ed. by Herbert Meißner, Berlin 1976, p. 51 f. See also Herbert Meißner/Alfred Bönsch, Die Entwicklung der bürgerlichen politischen Ökonomie in der Periode des Kapitalismus, in: Wirtschaft und Staat im Imperialismus, ed. by Lotte Zumppe, Berlin 1976, p. 286 ff.

² Meissner, p. 53.

However, it is unjustified to speak of a "fascist political economy". The basis of those doctrines that emerge under fascist rule is and remains state-monopoly capitalism. Significantly, economic doctrines that emerged under a bourgeois parliamentary order are widely accepted in fascist states. It is also quite revealing that some economic theory developed during the period of fascist rule survived the political regime to a considerable extent and was still quite effective after fascism had been crushed or pushed back and the monopoly bourgeoisie returned to a different form of rule.

The thesis of the non-existence of a specific "fascist political economy" seems to be contradicted by the fact that there was a "fascization process" of economic teaching in Germany. In fact, during the years of the "Third Reich", the pressure on bourgeois economists to adapt to the political conditions was very great, as was the willingness of economists to make a commitment to the fascist state and the ideology of the NSDAP. However, this process of fascization did not change the content of bourgeois economic theories to such an extent that we would be justified in speaking of a specific "fascist political economy".³

However, it must be noted that the example of Hitler's Germany alone is only suitable to a limited extent as a basis for a comprehensive treatment of the topic of "fascism and bourgeois political economy". From a historical perspective, fascist rule in Germany was relatively short-lived. The period of twelve years on which a judgment is to be made regarding the reflection of a specific political situation in a specific ideology is considerably narrowed by the period of the Second World War, during which the subject matter of economic literature was again greatly modified. An exhaustive treatment of the subject would require a more comprehensive analysis of the political economy in those countries that were exposed or subjected to fascist tyranny - a task that Marxist research essentially still has to accomplish.

The political orientation of the bourgeois economy at the time of fascist rule in Germany took place, as in other areas, under the slogan of "Gleichschaltung". Bourgeois economists were no less affected than other representatives of public life by the Gleichschaltung campaign, a political reprisal on a grand scale, a general attack on political opponents or "unsuitable" people who had previously held important positions in public life, combined with a redistribution of office in favour of party supporters or supporters of the fascist movement and with a partial restructuring and reorientation of certain organizations, insofar as they were not committed to fascism from the outset.⁴

The form in which the attempt to subordinate economic theory and economic propaganda to fascist ideology took place was primarily a discussion about a "new doctrine", about the subject and method of political economy, which was associated with terms such as "völkisch doctrine" and a new value judgment dispute. The "Gleichschaltung" of bourgeois economics and the search for a "völkisch doctrine" should be seen in the light of the fact that the arguments about economic problems expressed by responsible NSDAP spokespersons in their propaganda speeches and writings before 1933 no longer seemed suitable for the period of fascist rule. During the Weimar Republic, it was above all Gottfried Feder who provided ammunition for the NSDAP's economic propaganda with his 1919 manifesto on "breaking the bondage of money to interest", which he praised as a "radical remedy for the recovery of suffering humanity". With the help of pseudo-revolutionary phraseology, Feder sought to compete with the Marxist labor movement. The program of an alleged radical change in the social order was designed to destroy the capitalist system as a whole.

³ Werner Krause, *Wirtschaftstheorie unter dem Hakenkreuz*, Berlin 1969; see also M. N. Šmit, *Očerki istorii buržuaznoj političeskoj ekonomii*, Moscow 1961; *Geschichte der ökonomischen Lehrmeinungen*, Berlin 1965.

⁴ Krause, *Economic Theory*, p. 59 ff.

was not questioned, but at the same time a demagogic campaign was waged against lending capital to win votes.⁵

Hans Buchner made a shamefully failed attempt to combine traditional economic theory with fascist ideology early on in his "Grundriß einer nationalsozialistischen Volkswirtschaftslehre".⁶ However, Buchner only reflected the ideas of Feder and Max Frauendorfer, who, alongside the two Strasser brothers, became the NSDAP's most important spokespersons on economic issues for some time. Before 1933, Frauendorfer had primarily attempted to theoretically underpin the idea of professional status, which was linked to Italo-fascist and Catholic-clerical ideology.⁷ Also worth mentioning from the period before 1933 is Otto Strasser's propagation of the idea of self-sufficiency and the social demagoguery of Gregor Strasser, who, as head of the Reich organization of the NSDAP, also devoted himself to economic policy propaganda until he was booted out in December 1932.⁸

[306] What is remarkable about the writings and authors mentioned is that they all disappeared into oblivion after 1933. After the consolidation of political power and after the economic crisis had been replaced by the armaments boom, the economic propaganda of the monopoly bourgeoisie gave priority to other issues rather than the task of using pseudo-revolutionary phrases to win votes. The anti-capitalist note, which still played a not inconsiderable role here and there in the economic propaganda of the Hitler fascists, was greatly weakened after the consolidation of fascist rule. The obstructive propaganda slogans that were only laboriously dressed up in theory, such as the call for the "breaking of interest bondage", the introduction of "spring money" or the propaganda of the estates state, were thrown overboard as rearmament and rationalization plans began to play an ever greater role in economic policy.⁹

Among the authors who hoped to be able to offer a unified theory of economics during the "Third Reich" that both took into account the political-ideological wishes of the ruling regime and was able to fulfill a practical, economic-political function were Friedrich von Gottl-Ottlilienfeld, who revamped the theory of economics he had already developed in previous years¹⁰, and Werner Sombart with his "German Socialism"¹¹. These attempts failed¹² as did Othmar Spann's attempt to naturalize his pro-Fascist Catholic "universalist" doctrine¹³ in Germany.

Other authors, such as Erwin Wiskemann¹⁴ and Fritz Nonnenbruch¹⁵, intensively pursued the ideological orientation of bourgeois economics, but remained rather ineffective, especially as their concepts, which they had to offer as economic "theory", were still below the level of those of Sombart, Spann and Gottl-Ottlilienfeld.

⁵ For more details, see *ibid.* p. 17 ff.

⁶ Hans Buchner, *Grundriß einer nationalsozialistischen Volkswirtschaftslehre*, Munich 1933.

⁷ On the significance of the theory of the professional order, see Harry Maier, *Soziologie der Päpste. Lehre und Wirkung der katholischen Sozialtheorie*, Berlin 1965.

⁸ Kurt Gossweiler, *Die Rolle des Monopolkapitals bei der Herbeiführung der Röhm-Affäre* (June 30, 1934), *phil. Diss.*, Berlin 1963.

⁹ See Krause, *Economic Theory*, p. 76.

¹⁰ Friedrich von Gottl-Ottlilienfeld, *Die Läuterung des nationalökonomischen Denkens als deutsche Aufgabe*, Berlin 1934; the same, *Volk, Staat, Wirtschaft und Recht*, Berlin 1936.

¹¹ Werner Sombart, *German Socialism*, Berlin 1934.

¹² See Werner Krause, *Werner Sombart's Path from Catholic Socialism to Fascism*, Berlin 1962; the same, *Economic Theory*; A. M. Watschischin *Werner Sombart's Models of "German Socialism" - a Theoretical Basis of National Socialism*, in: *Bürgerliche und kleinbürgerliche ökonomische Theorien des Sozialismus (1917- 1945)*, edited in German by Werner Krause, Berlin 1978, p. 127 ff.

¹³ Othmar Spann, *Fighting Science. Collected essays on economics, social theory and philosophy*, Jena 1934.

¹⁴ Erwin Wiskemann *Die neue Wirtschaftswissenschaft*, Berlin 1936.

¹⁵ Fritz Nonnenbruch *Dynamic Economy*, Munich 1942.

The attempt made by the above-mentioned authors to create an economic doctrine that would provide both a theory and a corresponding set of instruments for the national economy according to the needs of monopoly capital and a doctrine that was in line with fascist propaganda slogans failed due to the contradiction between capitalist practice and fascist propaganda. If practice demanded a relationship to reality in economic life, the fascist propaganda slogans were and remained pure demagoguery.

One example of this conflict is the fate of "corporative state" propaganda before and after 1933. The so-called professional order played a considerable role in fascist [307] propaganda before 1933, even if it always took a back seat to other topics (Versailles, Marxism, "Jewry"). The corporative state propaganda contained an attack on the bourgeois-parliamentary order. For a political regime that on the one hand operated with social phrases to protect the interests of the bourgeoisie, but on the other hand intended to suppress all socialist and democratic regimes and institutions, the professional order, of which the corporate system of the Italian fascists was a variant, offered an opportunity to give the intended socio-economic changes a suitable form that had already been worked out by Catholic clerics. The occupational order contained an enforced "peace" between the classes and made it possible to disguise the terror against the exploited through demagoguery. It could be hypocritically proclaimed that capital and labor worked together "peacefully" by joining forces.

However, immediately after January 30, 1933, the corporative state propaganda was abandoned. The idea of the *corporative order*, which involved both a grouping according to professions as a fundamental organizational principle and the forced political and organizational unification of entrepreneurs and workers, was still used for a certain time as ideological support for the implementation of state monopolistic measures. In principle, however, it was eventually abandoned because the professional organization of the economy contradicted the monopoly masters' point of view. To enforce this point of view, they sought to divide the economy into purely entrepreneurial organizations in order to better place the business associations under the control of the monopoly within the framework of the so-called "self-administration of the economy".

The realization of this plan took place on the basis of the "Law on the Order of National Work" of 20 January 1934 in the period from February to November 1934 and was legally anchored with the "Law on the Preparation of the Organic Development of the German Economy" of 27 February 1934. However, a bourgeois economist wrote about the abandoned idea of the corporative state, wrongly emphasizing Hitler's role in particular: "The amateurish attempts made in the spring of 1933 to create the so-called corporative structure in a few weeks on the basis of purely theoretical knowledge with drawing boards, circles and colored pencils were therefore rightly dismissed by the Führer with the brief remark that this was not a matter of weeks, but a matter of the century. But this is to say that the new order cannot be formed theoretically, but can only grow out of the struggle for life, in the active interplay and mutual fertilization of practical organization and scientific knowledge."¹⁶

2. The role of traditional economic teaching in Germany after 1933

The fate of the idea of the corporative state stands here as an example of other abandoned slogans of fascist "theorists" and politicians from the period before 1933, which could not be integrated into economic theory because they brought no [308] practical benefit to the monopoly bourgeoisie and often proved to be a nuisance in their social-demagogic diction.

Rather, traditional theories that could be reconciled with the idea of a "managed economy" were in demand. In fact, the call for a "controlled economy" with the appropriate propaganda

¹⁶ Friedrich Völtz, Vom Werden des deutschen Sozialismus, in: Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft, 96/1936, S.1 f.

This was not lost from discussion until the collapse of the regime in 1945.

In addition to a rather lively discussion about such a "renewal" of economics, we also note the fact that in fascist Germany the theoretician was not very important in questions of practical economic policy.

This contradiction can be explained by the fascist ideologues' efforts to bring economic doctrine into line with fascist ideology. The Hitler fascists presented their "National Socialism" as overcoming the "capitalist system", as "German socialism". This claim stood in contrast to traditional bourgeois economics, which was quite naturally committed to the capitalist economic mechanism. In turn, capitalist practice could not do without the traditional economists, who were often accused of "liberalism", sometimes even of "Marxism", by the fascists. This dilemma, the call for a fascist economics on the one hand and the compulsion to fall back on traditional teachings in practical questions of economic policy on the other, gave rise to the aforementioned lively discussion on the renewal of economic teaching.

The book "Die dynamische Wirtschaft" (The Dynamic Economy) by Fritz Nonnenbruch, the long-time economics editor of the "Völkischer Beobachter", was indicative of the situation. This work of art has no place in a history of bourgeois political economy; in the specialist economic literature, it was only greeted with a sneer. But as a document illuminating the intellectual situation, it is very significant.¹⁷ Nonnenbruch wanted to solve the problem of making fascist rule palatable as "German socialism", to explain capitalism as alleged non-capitalism and at the same time to explain "National Socialism" as de facto non-socialism. He saw the "solution" to this problem in an escape into the abstruse phrases of fascist racial ideology and mysticism, while at the same time practicing practicalism.

A large part of the book served to minimize the importance of economic theories and to justify the practical economic policy of the fascists. It states: "Of course we want an ideal economy. An ideal economy is the most practical economy. But what is practical should not be determined by the mind through its theoretical constructions."¹⁸ And after a polemic against reconstruction in the Soviet Union: "Socialism based on a theory is junk socialism."¹⁹ In contrast to scientific socialism, Marxism, "National Socialism", "German socialism", was entirely geared towards practical politics: "If a government binds itself to a theory, [309] then it restricts its freedom of movement ... National Socialism renounces a theory for the sake of freedom of action. It thus renounces a picture of what the economy of German socialism would look like in detail. The people's faith in National Socialism is worth more than such an image. This belief of the German people in the future springs from the character of their race."²⁰ Nonnenbruch sought to disqualify theoretical thinking as belonging to the Jewish race, "mysticism" and "fateful transformation" with a "free creation of the Nordic man" and in this way to break away from previously fixed program points of the Hitler Party.

In economic life after 1933, the advice of science was more unwelcome than sought after. For example, Hjalmar Schacht once referred to the Führer's words in relation to trade: "Trade is the least suited to being run according to dogmatic systems and theories." No one therefore agreed more happily with the Führer's words than the practical merchant, for Hitler had said: "We know very well that we will not inhibit the initiative of personality at any point

¹⁷ The 1st edition of the book was published in 1936 by the central publishing house of the NSDAP, the 5th edition in 1942; however, the book only reached a total circulation of 17,000 copies.

¹⁸ Nonnenbruch, p. 22.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 24 f.

and 'we want to beware of any doctrine'. In practical economics, it is never about doctrines, but about the sober realization of what is."²¹

Some economists complained bitterly about the devaluation of economics associated with this pragmatism. In a review in 1935, Gerhard Albrecht spoke of the "often unrestrained attacks of a young generation against everything that is economics as it is and economic science as it has been handed down". Some were "blinded by the buzzwords of the day and mostly without sufficient insight into the scientific work actually done to interpret and explain economic life and its development from the mid-18th century to the present day" and "loudly and unrestrainedly sounded their call to turn away from everything that has been or what was before them". Science's assessment of the innovations that have been introduced is an achievement that is not currently in great demand.²²

Kurt Gossweiler has drawn attention to the fact that behind this aversion to science, behind the disdain for the advice of economic science in the "Third Reich" and behind the voices opposing it, there are also differences of opinion between various interest groups within monopoly capital on economic policy issues. He points out that the voices "warning against an underestimation of theory were heard in the years 1935 to 1937, i.e. in those years when the disputes over the course of economic policy between Schacht and his party supporters on the one hand, and Göring and IG Farben (Krauch) on the other, were rapidly coming to a head. Schacht and his party were at pains to prove - using theoretical principles - that the four-year plan policy of maximum self-sufficiency was dangerous economic nonsense. Their political and military opponents countered such warnings with a striking argument: Once we have won, the defeated will have to pay for everything! The German imperialist bourgeoisie preparing for the second round of arms for the redivision of the world did not need a well-rounded economic doctrine; the appropriate political economy for them was an economy of the maximum utilization of all economic forces for the most radical possible preparation for war and for the war itself, as well as the balancing and healing of all tensions, distortions and disproportions caused by the robbery and plundering of foreign countries and peoples."²³

The orientation towards a war-preparatory economy resulted in a significant restriction of the flexibility of economic policy described by the term "economic liberalism" and a considerable increase in dirigiste measures.

In fascist Germany, it therefore became common among economists to speak of the need for a "controlled economy". This catchphrase was used to justify state intervention in the economy and the development of suitable instruments for regulating the economy with the help of state power. The praise of state interventionism by bourgeois economists became the funeral dirge for so-called liberalism in fascist Germany.

The treatises on the "controlled economy" in fascist Germany in the mid-1930s were given a special nuance by optimistic statements about the course of the economy and simultaneous complaints about the miserable state of "German economics". The outward optimism was influenced by the armaments boom, by the considerable increase in demand for war material, for which the "Reich" acted as purchaser. Although there had been considerable concern about the poor foreign exchange and raw materials situation, these problems were overshadowed by the rosy mood in the economic-theoretical literature, which was caused by the belief in the miraculous and benevolent omnipotence of the state.

²¹ German History from 1918 to 1938 in Documents, Stuttgart 1938, p. 365 f.; Schacht in Berlin before the advisory board of the Reichsgruppe "Handel" on December 11, 1935.

²² Gerhard Albrecht, review, in: Jahrbuch für Nationalökonomie und Statistik, 141/1938, p. 618 ff.

²³ Kurt Gossweiler, Economic Theory and Economic Practice in Fascist Germany, in: JfW, 1975/11, p. 236 f.

State intervention in the economy was seen both as progress compared to the traditional "liberalist" doctrine as well as overcoming capitalism. In 1943, Hans Peter, who made significant contributions to the formation of bourgeois regulation theory at the time, wrote: "The controlled German economy is increasingly detaching itself from the traditional ideas of the capitalist past. In attempts to establish a deeper foundation for economic principles, one always encounters the difficulty of having to peel economic experience out of the shell of old forms that the theorists of the capitalist era have given it."²⁴ And Horst Jecht wrote about the need to correct economic views: "German economic policy since 1933 has led to a profound change in the prevailing views on the relationship between man and the economy. Whereas this was previously regarded as a fateful event that could at best be influenced in certain respects by state intervention and its effects on the economic individual mitigated, the idea of mastery through conscious state control has now become increasingly prevalent. It forces even the most stubborn advocates of the principle of economic self-regulation to review their views and imposes on economic science the duty of self-reflection on certain starting points of its doctrine that have hitherto been regarded as incontestable."²⁵ The "system of a controlled market economy" was praised by Erich Preiser as a "new economic system"; German economic policy had fundamentally changed the character of the economy "since the seizure of power".²⁶ According to Ludwig Häberlein, who viewed "the relationship between state and economy" from the point of view of a "National Socialist market order", this had been achieved by eliminating "the ruinous, false price and power competition of the liberalist system of free enterprise, which was destroying the economic body".²⁷

While there was no shortage of voices calling for a theoretical foundation for the policy of the "controlled economy", the contributions that were made to this during the period of fascist rule in Germany were, with a few exceptions that will be discussed later, on the whole quite meagre. In 1941, Erich Preiser attempted to work out the conceptual system of the "controlled economy". However, his treatment of the subject was so abstruse that the paper remained useless for economic practice. Hans Weigmann, the editor of the "Archiv für Wirtschaftsplanung" (Archive for Economic Planning), which had been published since 1941 in conjunction with the "Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft für Raumforschung" (Reich Working Group for Spatial Research), had a similar fate.²⁸

More significant in terms of the history of theory were the attempts by some economists to use mathematical analyses to provide economic management with some tools. If one traces the development of bourgeois economics, especially those directions that emerged from the marginal utility school, then it becomes clear that the application of mathematical methods had already been practised for more than half a century. In Germany, the mathematical direction of bourgeois economics had never really been able to gain a foothold due to the predominance of the historical school of bourgeois political economy, which was primarily oriented towards empirical, descriptive research into economic life; and even at the time of fascism, many people were quick to classify mathematical methods as belonging to the "liberalist era". But the discussion about this did not fall silent.

On January 18, 1936, the first meeting of a "community of promoters of mathematical economic and social research" initiated by economic practitioners took place. A journal, the "Archiv für mathematische Wirtschafts- und Sozialforschung" (Archive for Mathematical Economic and Social Research), was published in 1935. All this was done with the aim of promoting mathematical economic research, which had been neglected in Germany.

²⁴ Hans Peter, Theoretische Grundlagen der gelenkten Volkswirtschaft, in: Jahrbuch für Nationalökonomie und Statistik, 157/1943, p. 289.

²⁵ Horst Jecht, foreword to Gerda Kühnemann, Kritische Untersuchungen zur Konjunkturtheorie, Berlin 1941, p. 7.

²⁶ Erich Preiser, Wesen und Methoden der Wirtschaftslenkung, in: Finanzarchiv, 8/1941, p. 225.

²⁷ Ludwig Häberlein, Das Verhältnis von Staat und Wirtschaft, vol. 2, Berlin 1938, p. 126.

²⁸ Hans Weigmann, Zur gegenwärtigen Problemlage der Wirtschaftsplanung, vol. 1, Berlin 1941.

revitalize it. The editors of the "Archiv" included bourgeois economists who also had a well-known name in bourgeois economics after 1945: Hans Peter, Erich Schneider and Heinrich von Stackelberg. However, after a few notable beginnings, the publication of the "Archiv für mathematische Wirtschafts- und Sozialforschung" was discontinued after just a few years, while other journals were allowed to continue publication. For a variety of reasons, fascist economic policy obviously did not tolerate a numerical scientific examination. [312]

3. Requirements of economic practice and bourgeois economics

The liquidation of the "Archiv" was by no means the end of the discussion about the problems of the "controlled economy". The aforementioned editors of the "Archiv" in particular subsequently published a series of writings in a different context that rose above the generally very low level of bourgeois economics in fascist Germany. The growing dissemination of the views of bourgeois economists on the necessity, advantages and consequences of state influence on the overall economic reproduction process clearly reflected the development of state-monopoly capitalism.²⁹

Like the bourgeois theories of state regulation, the bourgeois theory of the circular flow, which does not examine individual aspects of the capitalist reproduction process but focuses on the overall process of social reproduction, is also suitable for exercising an economic policy function. It not only forms a theoretical basis for the economic policy of the monopoly bourgeoisie, but also a statistical basis for economic regulation concepts that are drawn up with the help of national accounts.³⁰

These economic problem theories corresponded and still correspond to the demands that the monopoly bourgeoisie places on its ideologists, and those economic schools and tendencies that have made state-monopoly economic regulation their field of investigation come closest to them. (In the present day, this is neo-Keynesianism and the so-called neoclassical synthesis).

Fascist states are generally dominated by economic theories that deal with precisely this problem of regulation. To a certain extent, the circular flow theory met the demands of bourgeois doctrine to make the problem of regulation the object of investigation of economic theory. Of course, its activity was as limited as bourgeois political economy as a whole is due to its class character. For our topic, it is essential that the development of bourgeois circulation theory in Germany confirms the thesis that economic theories that correspond to the needs and constraints of the capitalist economy are only to a small extent subject to the specific political relations of domination within capitalist society. The continuity of such economic doctrines as the theory of the circular flow, a continuity that extends across the various forms of political currents and forms of power within the framework of bourgeois class rule, was maintained despite all the loud demands made by fascist ideologues for a "renewal", a fundamental transformation of the previous economic doctrine. This continuity finds its most visible expression in the fact that, during the period of fascist rule, the theory of the circular flow adopted traditional doctrines from the period before 1933 and that the contributions to this theory developed in Germany between 1933 and 1944 were still effective after 1945 and were also taken up by capitalist foreign countries.

The importance of the above-mentioned theory and the [313] economic doctrines associated with it for economic practice in state-monopoly capitalism is also demonstrated by the fact that the contributions to its development during the period of fascist rule in Germany were among the few exceptions that corresponded to the international level of bourgeois economics.

²⁹ Alfred Bönsch, Die bürgerlichen Theorien der staatsmonopolistischen Wirtschaftsregulierung, in: Bürgerliche Ökonomie ohne Perspektive, p. 229 ff.

³⁰ Klaus O. W. Müller, Die bürgerliche Kreislauftheorie, Berlin 1968.

The dominant figure in the discussion about the development of bourgeois circulation theory at that time was Hans Peter. He expressed the opinion that pure theory had already matured sufficiently to provide practical assistance: "Pure theory has in part developed far beyond the extent necessary to cope with the practical tasks set. But it has only developed certain abstract forms of thought for dealing with these problems, and it is not in a position to concretize the data, which it tries to link, through statistical observations."³¹

The first volume of Peter's "Grundprobleme der theoretischen Nationalökonomie" was published in 1933, the second a year later. While the first two volumes were devoted to theoretical problems, the third volume (1937) dealt with the application of theory to concrete economic processes. Without making explicit recommendations, Peter dealt with some practical questions of economic policy, in which interventionism was in the foreground of consideration; problems of labour force reduction, interest rate policy, rationalization, armaments and war economy were dealt with.

Contrary to the fascists' claim to have revolutionized the economy, Peter emphasized that the continuity of economic development had been preserved. As he wrote in the third volume: "In addition to clarifying some factual questions, the volume presented here is also intended to prove that liberalist and National Socialist economics differ fundamentally in terms of ideology and that therefore the tasks that the economic policy-maker has to solve today arise from a different spirit than in the past, but that, for example, the circulation conditions of the national economy, the price laws and many other things have remained completely unchanged."³²

The examples given of the topics that German economists took up and continued during the period of fascist rule in Germany show that there were still authors who sought to theoretically grasp the economic processes of contemporary capitalism using the means of bourgeois economics. Of course, these examples do not prove the existence of a specific "fascist political economy". However, the political affiliation of the authors played a not insignificant role. Writings that were later republished in the FRG had previously, during the war, only met with a modest response. Peter, for example, did not make a great career in fascist Germany despite his contribution to the further development of modern bourgeois circular flow theory research. This was certainly also due to his past (he was known for his Marx studies). What remains to be said is that Peter is also an example of the fact that the development of state-monopoly capitalism in fascist Germany was the basis for the emergence of theoretical work that continued to be of great service to the monopoly bourgeoisie even after the fall of the Hitler regime.

[314] Heinrich von Stackelberg, who was a member of the NSDAP and the SS and not burdened by Marx studies like Peter, fared much better. He already achieved fame during the fascist era. Stackelberg's contribution to the bourgeois theory of market forms also had an international standing within the framework of bourgeois economics, and his work, which was written before 1945, was also referred to in capitalist countries in the post-war years.³³

In addition to the theoretically oriented literature, some examples of which have been mentioned here, there was a wealth of such works that took a direct stance on fascist economic policy. Nonnenbruch's book should be mentioned once again as a model for publications in which economic policy was interpreted from the point of view of fascist ideologists.

The problem of "job creation" was at the forefront of eagerly discussed economic policy issues, because employment policy is not only of interest in terms of economic policy,

³¹ Hans Peter, Zur Frage der theoretischen Grundlagen der Wirtschaftslenkung, in: Finanzarchiv, 9/1943, p. 3 f.

³² Derselbe, Grundprobleme der theoretischen Nationalökonomie, vol. 3: Automatischer Prozess und gestaltete Volkswirtschaft, Stuttgart 1937, p. IV.

³³ Klaus O. W. Müller, Heinrich v. Stackelberg - a modern bourgeois economist. A critical contribution to the history of bourgeois economic thought in Germany, Berlin 1965.

but was also a first-rate propaganda hit. The decline in unemployment, which was primarily due to armaments policy, was interpreted with preference as an outstanding achievement of fascist economic policy. Nonnenbruch linked "job creation" with the financial policy of the fascist state and used it to justify the continuation of the heavy tax burden and state intervention already practised in the Weimar Republic: "An example of how National Socialism exploited flaws in the capitalist economic system and earlier economic policy is the way it began to implement its phrase: 'Work creates capital'"

... National Socialism calculated that the use of state funds and state guarantees for job creation would boost the economy and increase tax revenues. The increased tax revenues from economic stimulation were to cover the sums spent to finance job creation and thus economic stimulation." In this way, the "excessive taxes were an aid to the National Socialist economic revival".³⁴

The financing problem also played a major role in connection with rearmament. Nonnenbruch justified the state's activity in armaments financing as stimulating the economy: "The economic strategy of National Socialism consists in the fact that it transforms a situation in which the state is powerless into a situation in which it has freedom of action. The National Socialist state partially seizes the liquid resources of the money market for itself ... The loosening of the capital market then also takes place in the shadow of this state monetary policy. It is hard to see why there should be no capital market in the economy of German socialism."³⁵ In connection with a critical examination of the financing of the First World War, Nonnenbruch explained that rearmament was highly beneficial for the economy and was not accompanied by harmful side effects "if it is properly financed".³⁶

Another frequently discussed topic of fascist economics was the "large-scale economy". Nonnenbruch said: "The supply of agricultural products [315] would look very different if Germany were the core of a greater economic area."³⁷ In this question, economics met geopolitics.³⁸ Karl Haushofer set geopolitics the task of forging the intellectual weapons that had to precede the use of military weapons.³⁹ In their dreams of a large-scale economy, the economists of Hitler's Germany were largely based on the arguments of the Haushofer School (Erich Obst, Otto Maull, Hermann Lautensach), which had already emerged in the Weimar Republic.

4. On the discussion in the GDR about economic literature during the fascist era

Hans Peter's work on circular flow theory, which was mainly published between 1941 and 1943, later merged with Keynes' theory. "The symbiosis of the substantive analysis of the economic cycle based on Keynesian theory with Peter's abstract cycle structure theory formed the basis on which later, after the Second World War, bourgeois cycle theory research also developed further in West Germany and is essentially still based today."⁴⁰

The role of Keynesianism in fascist Germany is an interesting and topical problem in this context. There has been a dispute among Marxist researchers on this question, which continues to this day.⁴¹

³⁴ Nonnenbruch, p. 100 f.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 188.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 202.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 230.

³⁸ See Günter Heyden, *Kritik der deutschen Geopolitik. Wesen und soziale Funktion einer reaktionären soziologischen Schule*, Berlin 1958.

³⁹ See Karl Haushofer, *Grenzen in ihrer geographischen und politischen Bedeutung*, Heidelberg/Berlin/Magdeburg 1939, p. 155.

⁴⁰ Müller, *Kreislauftheorie*, p. 29.

⁴¹ See Thomas Kuczynski, *Die unterschiedlichen wirtschaftspolitischen Konzeptionen des deutschen Imperialismus zur Überwindung der Wirtschaftskrise in Deutschland 1932/33 und deren Effektivität*, in: *Wirtschaft und Staat im Imperialismus*, p. 230, note 69.

Karl-Heinz Schwank has argued that Keynesianism, as the predominant political-economic apologetic of state-monopoly capitalism, helped to justify, among other things, the measures with which German fascism "solved" the unemployment problem and which ultimately led to the Second World War: "The so-called new plan of the German fascists, which was developed with Schacht's outstanding participation and which, according to his admission, contributed so much 'to the implementation of rearmament ... ', contains practically the ideas that Keynes justifies. It is no wonder that 'Der deutsche Volkswirt' celebrated the appearance of Keynes'

The 'General Theory' was greeted with the words that Keynes' ideas 'in reality represent the theoretical explanation and justification of National Socialist economic policy'. The fact that Keynes' ideas suited fascism is also shown by the fact that the term 'full employment' was soon heard from fascist mouths."⁴² Schwank formulated that the German-fascist economic policy corresponded to Keynes' theory.

Klaus Müller writes that Keynes' doctrine found a large number of followers in Germany immediately after it [316] became known, i.e. in 1936, "who were taken in by Keynes' economic-theoretical argumentation and began to study and propagate this doctrine and its consequences".⁴³ Müller registered a broad, but not universally approving response to Keynes' teachings among German bourgeois economists. In contrast to developments in the imperialist countries of the Anglo-Saxon-speaking world, Keynesianism did not emerge as an independent trend within German bourgeois political economy in fascist Germany.⁴⁴ Müller attributes this to the fact "that the German monopoly bourgeoisie during the reign of Hitler's fascism, right into the first years of the war, pursued a policy of plundering its own people and foreign peoples that was so extraordinarily successful for it, for which it did not urgently need an economic-theoretical analysis that was primarily oriented towards a differentiated economic policy practice in order to achieve its predatory goals".⁴⁵

The author takes a similar view to Müller regarding the resonance of Keynes' book in fascist Germany, but estimates the number of negative opinions to be greater.

The point on which Müller and Krause⁴⁶ differ from Schwank's assessment, as well as Jürgen Kuczynski's⁴⁷ and V. S. Volodin's⁴⁸, is the question of the relationship between fascist economic policy and Keynesian economic theory. Müller writes about the question of whether the economic policy of the Hitler government could be described as Pro-Keynesian without any restrictions:

"Krause is right in so far as the *concrete* daily economic policy tasks of the German monopoly bourgeoisie at the time of Hitler-fascism by no means corresponded in all points with the concrete economic policy recommendations of Keynes and a policy was pursued here which in some parts was even directly contrary to Keynes' derivations ... Keynes worked out a system of economic theory which in its basic features was adapted to the conditions of state-monopoly capitalism. In this respect, its thrust, namely the orientation towards stabilization of the state-monopoly system with the concrete objective of securing maximum profits for the monopoly bourgeoisie, *also* corresponds to the needs of the German monopoly bourgeoisie at the time of Hitler-fascism. The different historical and concrete premises in the economic basis of the individual imperialist countries undoubtedly resulted in

⁴² Karl-Heinz Schwank, Lord Keynes' theory - neither revolutionary nor scientific, Berlin 1961, p. 55 f.

⁴³ Klaus O. W. Müller, Neo-Keynesianism. Kritische Untersuchung einer modernen staatsmonopolkapitalistischen Wirtschaftslehre, Berlin 1976, p. 63.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 68.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See Werner Krause, Die "gelenkte Wirtschaft" und die ökonomische Theorie, in: Krause, Wirtschaftstheorie, esp. p. 159 ff.

⁴⁷ See Jürgen Kuczynski, Die Geschichte der Lage der Arbeiter in England von 1940 bis in die Gegenwart, Vol. IV, Part 3, Berlin 1955, p. 317.

⁴⁸ See W. S. Wolodin, Keynes - an Ideologist of Monopoly Capital, Berlin 1958, p. 118 f.

The economic policy actions of the ruling class were also nuanced in different ways, using the individual instruments and methods of economic policy in different ways. With increasing rearmament and entry into the war, the economic problems of the German monopoly bourgeoisie also became increasingly complicated (e.g. lack of raw materials, unfavorable foreign exchange situation). Of course, Keynes had abstracted from such circumstances that modified the mechanism of state-monopoly capitalism."⁴⁹

Thomas Kuczynski, who recognizes neither opinion as correct, points out that Keynes imagined "maintaining capitalism with the help of a peacetime economy organized as a war economy".⁵⁰ This insight does not shed much more light on the discussion. Th. Kuczynski merely refers to a doubt expressed by Keynes in 1940 about the efficiency of the capitalist peacetime economy. However, an analysis of the impact of Keynesianism in fascist Germany must be based on the resonance of Keynes's "General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money", which appeared in German immediately after the English edition in 1936 and which was the source of the actual dissemination of Keynes's ideas.

Herbert Meissner characterized Keynesianism as follows: "Keynesianism is based on the fact that in modern capitalism there is a shortage of demand and an oversupply of goods. He explained this with a 'fundamental psychological law', according to which people increase their consumption expenditure disproportionately as their income grows and save an increasing proportion of the increase in income. This 'propensity to save' causes a drop in demand, resulting in a decline in production and unemployment. These consequences of the 'propensity to save' could only be avoided if a sum equal to the savings was always invested in the economy, because then the loss of consumer demand would be offset by demand on the capital goods market ... Since the increase in effective aggregate demand is the key point of Keynesianism, its economic policy proposals boil down to finding ways of increasing demand for consumer goods and means of production. In the case of consumer goods, it is proposed to increase the unproductive consumption of the ruling classes ... The demand for means of production should be stimulated by increasing the amount of money in circulation, thereby increasing the supply of loan capital, lowering the interest rate and making the expansion of production attractive by taking out loans. In addition, the state should keep the reproduction process going through public investment for unproductive purposes."⁵¹

This brief summary of Keynes' conception shows how little interest the Keynesian variant could have had for the fascist economic politicians. It was not the increase in overall demand (demand for means of production and consumption), the oversupply of goods and the increase in the number of employees to increase demand that was the main problem for economic policy-makers during the fascist dictatorship, but the concern of how to supply the armaments industry with raw materials and labor and how to finance the armaments orders. There could be no question of an oversupply of goods in fascist Germany, just as there was no question of boosting the consumer goods industry. Fascist economic politicians did not share Keynes' fear that consumers would save too much and that this would lead to a drop in demand.

Keynes saw a decline in production and unemployment as an obstacle to [318] the drop in demand. However, these worries were already a thing of the past in Germany in 1936; instead, it became characteristic that "not only the raw materials, but also the available reserves of labor and finally even the capacities of heavy industry were no longer sufficient to meet the demands of final production".⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 72 f.

⁵⁰ Th. Kuczynski, p. 230.

⁵¹ Ökonomisches Lexikon, Vol. A-K, Berlin 1966, p. 1067 f.

⁵² Hans Mottek/ Walter Becker/Alfred Schröter, Wirtschaftsgeschichte Deutschlands, Vol. III, Berlin 1975, p. 316.

The "savings opponent" Keynes on the one hand and the fascist "forced savers", the representatives of Schacht's "New Plan" and Göring's "Four-Year Plan" on the other had very different motivations: Boosting the economy on the one hand and safeguarding the rest of the economy on the other. This resulted in very different points of view, although both sides represented the interests of state-monopoly capitalism.

It cannot be denied that Keynes has provided theoretical arguments for all economic politicians who advocate an active role of the bourgeois state in the economy. "The essential economic policy conclusions of Keynes consist in the thesis that in the absence of investment and therefore of demand on the part of private entrepreneurs or consumers, the state must fill the gap by so-called public or government investment."⁵³ Key's advocacy of unproductive investment and financing through the issue of bank notes reveals a close affinity with politicians who pursue a policy of armaments and inflation. However, when considering the concrete means on this and that side, the points of view can certainly diverge.

Keynes undoubtedly met with interest in fascist Germany. However, the numerous comments on Keynes' work in the economic press also prove that the interest remained very theoretical and had no effect on practical economic policy, because in this area the divergent points of view were more important than the converging ones.

Another topic of discussion among Marxist authors is the role of neoliberalism during the fascist era.

Neoliberalism is a branch of bourgeois political economy that claims to want to enforce free competition with the help of the state and uses the doctrine of order types or market forms as a theoretical tool. Helga Nussbaum has interpreted German neo-liberalism as an expression of a certain resistance to certain consequences of the development of state-monopoly capitalism, which caused no small concern to a section of the bourgeoisie.⁵⁴

The contradictory character of the neoliberals' peculiar "anti-monopolism" and the anti-fascist pretence with which they liked to adorn themselves after 1945 have been repeatedly analyzed in Marxist literature, for example by I. G. Bljumin⁵⁵, Robert Namann⁵⁶ and Hermann Turley.⁵⁷

The objections of the neoliberals had already been raised in the Weimar Republic during the great world economic crisis, and they were revived in 1936/37 [319]. Naumann examined the question of the "adaptation of liberalism to fascism by the neoliberals". "Their free-market doctrine was the expression of a certain protest against the conditions at that time ... So-called free enterprise, i.e. small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, were also dissatisfied with the fascist policy of granting credit and allocating materials and labor. It objected to the fascist policy of credit expansion and inflation because, as a result of the resulting devaluation of money with a simultaneous price freeze, it led to a redistribution of values and national income in favor of the financial hyenas and, in turn, disadvantaged the larger, medium-sized and smaller entrepreneurs to a certain extent."⁵⁸

At the same time, Naumann, like Turley, showed the limitations of the anti-monopoly campaign, which, among other things, did not question the continued existence of capitalist society and fascist rule, but was linked to pronounced anti-communism. It was precisely the doctrines and methods of the neo-liberals developed in Germany before 1945 that were to have a major impact in the

⁵³ Meißner/Bönisch, p. 292.

⁵⁴ See Helga Nussbaum, *Bürgerliche Monopolgegnerschaft*, in: JfW, 1962/III.

⁵⁵ I. G. Bljumin, *Die Krise der modernen bürgerlichen Ökonomie*, Berlin 1962.

⁵⁶ Robert Naumann, *Theory and Practice of Neoliberalism*, Berlin 1957.

⁵⁷ Hermann Turley, *Neoliberal Monopoly Theory and "Antimonopolism"*, Berlin 1961.

⁵⁸ Naumann, p. 76 ff.

The reason for this is threefold: a theoretical-historical, an economic-political and a propagandistic one. The reason for this is threefold: a theoretical-historical, an economic-political and a propagandistic one.

In terms of theoretical history, the most important neoliberal theorists, such as Walter Eucken, drew on Max Weber's methodology in order to help the bourgeois political economy out of its crisis. The form in which this methodological "reflection" on the theory of ideal types etc. took place was also accepted by the bourgeoisie in the FRG and was thus continued almost without interruption by its ideologues after 1945.

In terms of economic policy, the neo-liberal concept had many points of reference after 1945, when West German imperialism had to take up arms against some of the restrictive measures of the occupying authorities.⁵⁹

Finally, the presumed gloriol of resistance to the economic ambitions of the Hitler fa- shists contributed not a little to the fact that the anti-socialist demagogy of neo-liberalism was able to adorn itself with the cloak of alleged anti-fascism.

Finally, if we ask whether the German fascists succeeded in presenting the required "complete doctrine", we can conclude that Hitler's Germany presented a picture of the decomposition of old economic schools and tendencies of bourgeois economics, without a new doctrine having emerged that would have done justice to the new economic and political conditions. It can be stated that bourgeois political economy in Germany in the years 1933 to 1944 was only able to adapt to the new requirements of state-monopoly capitalism to a very inadequate degree. The reason for this is to be seen in the fact that it was burdened by a number of additional circumstances which were effective alongside the causes generally applicable to the crisis of the modern bourgeois economy and which depressed its level even further. These additional factors were [320]

1. the strain to which the bourgeois political economy in Germany was subjected by its reactionary traditions;
2. the political circumstances, in particular the loss of scientists due to persecution and emigration, the general political intolerance in the scientific policy of the Hitler government and the fascist war policy, while interest in bourgeois social and economic theories was minimal;
3. the brevity of the historical period between the most important changes in the German economy since 1933 and the collapse of the fascist state, which left little room for adjustment to the new problems.⁶⁰

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⁵⁹ Werner Krause, *Der westdeutsche Neoliberalismus*, in: *Bürgerliche Ökonomie im modernen Kapitalismus*, ed. by Herbert Meißner, Berlin 1964, p. 48 ff.

⁶⁰ See Krause, *Economic Theory*, p. 204 f.

Part III: Anti-fascist struggle and ideological confrontation

Klaus Mammach: On the anti-fascist struggle of the KPD

From the time when fascism first became a danger to the working class and all other democratic forces in Germany, the KPD began to analyze its class character and mass base, to develop an anti-fascist strategy and tactics and to implement them in the practice of the class struggle. The realization of the nature of fascism and the elaboration of a policy aimed at combating, pushing back and ultimately defeating it depended on the one hand on its development, on how it increasingly revealed its nature, its true goals; on the other hand, they depended on practical experience in the anti-fascist struggle. Accordingly, the KPD was able to perfect its analysis of fascism and its strategy and tactics for destroying it and opening up the path of social change to be taken afterwards. In this process, the revolutionary party of the German working class also learned from the experiences of other communist parties and from the insights gained by the leading organs of the Communist International, which always provided the German section with advice and assistance in the development of its anti-fascist policy.

1. Analysis of fascism

When the revolutionary post-war crisis reached a new climax in 1923, extremely reactionary circles of finance capital increasingly supported the Nazi Party and the Deutsch-Völkische Freiheits- partei. The fascist movement gained influence and for the first time became a serious threat to the working class and all other democratic forces. The KPD became more intensively involved in analyzing the class character and mass base of the fascist movement in order to be able to draw appropriate conclusions for its strategy and tactics.

The 8th Party Congress, which took place in Leipzig from January 28 to February 1, 1923, drew attention to the fact that the victory of fascism in Italy had strengthened the fascist movement in other countries. With regard to Germany and as a conclusion from the Nazi Party's advance in Bavaria in particular, he stated: "The alliance of big business with the fascists threatens the German proletariat with unheard-of slavery."¹ The KPD thus pointed out on whose behalf the fascist movement [324] was active, whose interests it served - despite or precisely because of its national and social demagoguery.

At the same time, the party congress analyzed the social basis of this movement, "whose masses are the petty bourgeoisie", which is becoming increasingly impoverished, and "whose leaders are declassed bourgeois elements". However, the party congress emphasized that this movement was steered by "extreme reaction, heavy industry, the junkers and the military".²

In the "Theses on Fascism", the Central Committee of the KPD set out the main thrust of the struggle on August 5/6, 1923, when it stated that fascism led by the big bourgeoisie was "the main enemy of the proletariat",³ against which both defensive and ideological struggle must be waged. The communists unequivocally defined their relationship to the bourgeois-democratic republic in the fight against fascism. If the Communist Party "fights against the dangers threatening the bourgeois republic from the side of the fascists, although it is the party of the proletarian dictatorship and not of the bourgeois republic", this means that it defends the direct interests of the working class, "which cannot be satisfied by democracy, but which are even worse off under white bourgeois rule".

¹ Manifesto to the international proletariat and to the workers of Germany in: [324] Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, (hereafter Documents and Materials), Vol. VII/2, Berlin 1966, p. 225.

² Ibid., p. 243.

³ "Theses on Fascism" adopted at the meeting of the Central Committee of the KPD August 5/6, 1923, in: Dokumente und Materialien, p. 399.

than in bourgeois democracy".⁴ The communists were thus already pointing to the difference between bourgeois parliamentary and fascist forms of rule.

As the fascist movement was still "young" and underdeveloped during the revolutionary post-war crisis, the KPD was not yet able to correctly recognize all sides of fascism in its analysis and could not yet reach valid judgments on every question. The communists correctly assessed the mass base of the fascist movement as petty bourgeois. With regard to the class character, there were still different assessments in the KPD documents at the beginning. At this time, the participation of the petty-bourgeois masses made it difficult not only for the German Communists but also for the Comintern to recognize that the mass base did not shape the character and politics of this movement. Thus, assessments of fascism as an "oppositional movement of the petty bourgeoisie", which was merely "exploited" by the big bourgeoisie,⁵ stood alongside statements that this movement was led and directed by the big bourgeoisie. In the early days of the fascist movement, it was also still difficult for the KPD to differentiate between the individual groupings of the big bourgeoisie and their relationship to the fascist movement. An essential, further-reaching approach was the indication of the 8th Party Congress that the outermost reaction, the heavy industrial wing of finance capital, sought to use the fascist movement for its goals.

When it became increasingly obvious towards the end of the period of relative stabilization that, in view of the revolutionary upswing of the workers' movement and the growing signs of crisis in the economy, in the [325] upper middle-class parties and in the parliamentary system, significant sections of monopoly capital were turning towards open, terrorist dictatorship and relying more and more on the Nazi Party, the KPD turned once again to the problem of fascism. At its 12th Party Congress in June 1920, it declared that the powerful social struggles of the proletariat would cause the ruling class to concentrate political violence against the working class. "The present bourgeois party system, the bourgeois-democratic constitution and the parliamentary form of rule of the bourgeoisie are proving more and more inadequate and unsuitable for this task."⁶ The party congress came to the conclusion: "The establishment of the undisguised dictatorship of finance capital, freed from formal democratic barriers, is placed on the agenda."⁷ Ernst Thälmann referred to the successes of the Nazi party in Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Thuringia and Baden: "This advance of fascism in Germany is in line with the general fascization of bourgeois methods of rule."⁸ With this statement, Thälmann made clear both the connection and the difference between the fascist movement and fascization politics, i.e. the use of fascist methods by bourgeois, non-fascist governments. This was an important insight for the period in which the reorientation of part of the German bourgeoisie towards the establishment of an open terrorist dictatorship was just beginning.

At the plenum of the Central Committee on 24/25 October 1929, Thälmann analyzed the growth of the mass base of fascism: the petty bourgeoisie formed the social mass base of the Hitler Party. The influx of "the impoverished middle classes, large sections of the lumpenproletariat ... to the National Socialists" was "the expression of growing dissatisfaction with the policies of this government (the Social Democratic-led Grand Coalition - K. M.), with the system of this republic".⁹ One should not underestimate the Nazis' attempts "to poison and poison the people with all possible methods".

⁴ Resolution of the ECCI, the representatives of the KPD headquarters and the left-wing opposition from the beginning of May 1923, in: *Doku- mente und Materialien*, p. 302 f.

⁵ Guidelines of the KPD headquarters of August 5, 1923 for political mass work among the middle classes, in: *Dokumente und Materialien*, p. 383.

⁶ Resolution on the political situation and the tasks of the KPD, in: *Dokumente und Materialien*, Vol. VIII, Berlin 1975, S. 820.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 821.

⁸ Ernst Thälmann, *Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. II, Berlin 1956, p. 93.

⁹ Quoted from Klaus Mammach, *Bemerkungen über die Wende der KPD zum Kampf gegen den Faschismus*, in: *BzG*,

4/1963,
S. 664.

Irritation" to gain influence in the working class as well. German fascism was growing, according to the resolution of this Central Committee meeting. This was also expressed in the alliance of the NSDAP, Hugenberg's DNVP and monopolists such as Fritz Thyssen and Albert Vögler in joint demagogic and chauvinistic agitation and action against the Young Plan. Finance capital promoted the fascist movement "through enormous sums of money and state-police support".¹⁰

Consequently, the KPD saw the fall of the Grand Coalition in March 1930 as a step in the right direction,

"to greatly accelerate the establishment of the open dictatorship of finance capital and the entire fascist development in Germany".¹¹ At this time, the KPD began to work out in a differentiated way which circles of the ruling class were relying on Hitler's party in order to establish the open dictatorship with its help

[326] With the statement made by the Politburo on June 4, 1930, that the fascist movement was headed by "conscious and unscrupulous agents of finance capital, especially heavy industrial entrepreneurship",¹² the KPD made it clear that extreme reactionary forces of the big bourgeoisie were increasingly influencing the Nazi Party and using it to achieve their goals. In its "Program Declaration for the National and Social Liberation of the German People" of August 1930, the KPD demonstrated that the NSDAP was neither national, nor socialist, nor a workers' party, but "a party of extreme reaction".¹³ At the same time, in a speech in Hamburg, Ernst Thälmann described the "Third Reich" proposed by the Nazi party as "open fascism", as "the most brutal form of rule of finance capital".¹⁴

How the KPD - in contrast to the assertion of bourgeois and social democratic historians that it made no distinction between bourgeois democracy and fascism - progressed in the realization that fascism in power does not simply mean the replacement of one bourgeois government by another, but the replacement of one form of state of class rule of the bourgeoisie by another, can be seen from the statement of the chairman of the KPD at the Central Committee meeting in January 1931: "The forms of rule change, not the content of rule, insofar as bourgeois democracy is replaced by the fascist dictatorship."¹⁵

However, the KPD also made misjudgments. For example, it described the Brüning cabinet as "Government of the implementation of the fascist dictatorship" - an assessment that was modified by the statement that the dictatorship of capital in Germany had "the character of a maturing, if not yet mature fascist dictatorship"¹⁶, but nevertheless did not correspond to the real situation. This characterization of the Brüning government overestimated the degree of fascistization achieved and did not take into account the previously recognized difference between fascist policy and fascist dictatorship. However, it was correct when the KPD at the same time characterized the course initiated by Brüning's presidential cabinet by pointing to the use of "not only the 'usual', 'traditional' methods of repression, but increasingly ... fascist methods of violence" to the "exercise of brutal terror against the workers' movement with the help of the fascist mass movement organized and financed by big business".¹⁷

¹⁰ Resolution of the conference of the Central Committee of the KPD on October 24/25, 1929 on the fight against the Young Plan, in: Doku- mente und Materialien, Vol. VIII, p. 907.

¹¹ Politburo resolution of April 5, 1930 on the struggle for the implementation of party resolutions, in: Die Rote Fahne, No. 83, April 8, 1930.

¹² Resolution on the struggle against fascism in: Die Rote Fahne, No. 137, from June 15, 1930.

¹³ Die Rote Fahne, No. 197, from August 24, 1930.

¹⁴ Thälmann, Speeches and Essays, p. 509.

¹⁵ The same author, Volksrevolution über Deutschland. Speech at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the KPD January 15-17, 1931, Berlin 1931, p. 29.

¹⁶ The next and higher tasks of the KPD (Resolution of the Central Committee Plenum of January 15-17, 1931), in: Die Rote Fahne, No. 17, January 21, 1931.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Overcoming false assessments, partly brought about by the influence of left-wing sectarian forces around Heinz Neumann¹⁸, the KPD worked out ever more clearly that a "fascization of Germany" was taking place under the bourgeois governments, but that Nazism "wants to establish an open, fascist dictatorship over Germany", as stated in the Central Committee's call for anti-fascist action on May 25, 1932¹⁹. Ernst Thälmann saw the course of the Papen government, which replaced the Brüning government in June 1932, as "preparation for an open, fascist dictatorship". The aim of the big bourgeoisie was "to achieve and implement a higher level of fascization in order to advance with brute force against the working class and the working people without the open, fascist dictatorship already being present in Germany".²⁰ At the beginning of December 1932, the KPD characterized the presidential cabinet under Schleicher as "a placeholder cabinet for the preparation of a Hitler coalition or Hitler government"²¹. And consequently, in its appeal of 30 January 1933, it described the Hitler-Papen-Hugenberg government as a "cabinet of open, fascist dictatorship"²² that would eliminate the last democratic rights, smash the workers' organizations, exercise unrestrained terror and set course for imperialist war. Ernst Thälmann specified this assessment in his appeal to all communists in February 1933, when he described the Hitler cabinet as "government of civil war against the working masses", as a "government of enslavement of the working class", as a "government preparing the war of revenge of German imperialism against Poland and France and provocations against the Soviet Union".²³

Through its analytical activity, the KPD under the leadership of Ernst Thälmann, as a section of the Communist International, helped to define the class character of fascism and the role of the fascist mass base in a universally valid way. The German Communists worked out the difference between the fascization policies of the big bourgeois governments and the open, fascist dictatorship, which they characterized as the dictatorship of the extremely reactionary forces of the big bourgeoisie. They recognized the difference between the forms of imperialist rule, between bourgeois democracy and fascist dictatorship. Finally, they recognized the connection between fascism and war, between the establishment of the open terrorist dictatorship in Germany and the resulting increased danger of war. In this way, the KPD, which received essential suggestions and advice through the consultations in the leading organs of the Communist International, made its own contribution to the insights and theoretical generalizations that the Comintern arrived at with regard to fascism.

The analysis of fascism in Germany was the prerequisite for the KPD to develop an anti-fascist strategy and tactics corresponding to the conditions of the class struggle in this country. [328]

2. *United front policy*

An integral part of the KPD's policy in the struggle against monopoly capital was its struggle for the unity of action of the working class. Creating this became even more urgent in the face of the fascist danger. "The danger of fascism can only be countered by developing the activity of the proletariat and regaining its leading role in the class struggle against the magnates of heavy industry and the banks," declared the 8th Party Congress.²⁴ In order to fulfill this task, the proletariat had to act unitedly as a class in the opinion of the KPD, the

¹⁸ See Eckhard Trümper, *Über die Entwicklung der Politik der KPD und ihre Verwirklichung von den Reichstagswahlen im September 1930 bis zur Tagung des Zentralkomitees der KPD im Mai 1931*, phil. Diss., Berlin 1972, p. 93 ff.

¹⁹ *The Anti-Fascist Action. Dokumentation und Chronik Mai 1932 bis Januar 1933*, (hereafter: *Die Antifaschistische Aktion*), ed. and imported by Heinz Karl and Erika Kücklich with the collaboration of Elfriede Fölster and Käthe Haferkorn, Berlin 1965, p. 33.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 354.

²³ Karl-Heinz Hädicke/Gerhard Nitzsche, Thälmann's appeal to all Communists, in: *BzG*, 4/1959, p. 791.

²⁴ Resolution on the political situation and the next tasks of the party, in: *Dokumente und Materialien*, Vol. VII/2,

A united front of the various directions of the workers' movement should be established. The party saw the starting point for this in the coordinated action of the KPD, SPD and ADGB in particular, which would make it possible to win over further proletarian strata for the struggle. The party congress therefore affirmed: "The communists are ready at every hour to lead the struggle for the interests of the proletariat with all proletarians and all proletarian organizations and parties." The party must therefore address "both the masses and the leaders of all proletarian organizations".²⁵ The party congress emphasized with all clarity: "The view that the establishment of the united front is only possible by appealing to the masses to fight (only 'from below' or only by negotiating with the top bodies (only 'from above') is undialectical and rigid."²⁶

As the fascists were using terrorist gangs against the workers' movement, the KPD considered it necessary to form "defensive organizations against fascism" through the trade unions and works councils,²⁷ which were to be an expression of the united front. "Only the unification of *all* politically or trade union-organized workers in *a* defensive organization can guarantee the defeat of the fascist organization."²⁸ But it was not just about the defensive anti-fascist struggle. It was also necessary to carry out a "systematic education of the working class about the anti-class character of the fascist movement", to establish joint organs of the workers' parties and organizations to lead anti-fascist actions, to form control committees to prevent the transport of fascist gangs and weapons, to use the parliaments for the fight against fascism and to reach agreements for joint international action across national borders.²⁹

With this conception, the communists had an orientation corresponding to the actual conditions and the real situation in the struggle for unity of action against [329] the anti-popular national and social disaster policy of the big bourgeoisie and against the increasing fascist danger emanating from its extremely reactionary circles.

The KPD made considerable progress in realizing the united front policy in 1923. They were achieved in the struggle against both the exploitation and oppression policies of the Reich government and the machinations of fascist reaction. In March, for example, 40,000 workers in Upper Silesia went on strike for the reinstatement of revolutionary workers' councillors who had been reprimanded and against the provocations of fascist groups in the factories. In Saxony in the same month, the Communists and the Social Democrats concluded an agreement providing for measures against the fascists. Joint anti-fascist action was also agreed and initiated elsewhere on a local and regional scale. Revolutionary works councils increasingly organized actions against the fascist counter-revolution. From the spring onwards, proletarian hundred-man squads were formed from members of the workers' parties and trade unions in various areas of Germany, which protected the property of workers' organizations, demonstrations and strikes and prevented fascist provocations. Hundreds of thousands of workers, including Social Democrats and trade unionists, responded to the KPD's call for an "Anti-Fascist Day" and united for rallies and demonstrations on July 29, 1923. These and similar anti-fascist actions were part of the huge mass movement that finally toppled the Cuno government.

Another form of united front emerged with the action committees formed in various industrial areas by Communists, Social Democrats and trade unionists in the fall of 1923.

²⁵ Guidelines on the Tactics of the United Front and the Workers' Government, in: Documents and Materials, p. 247.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 247 f.

²⁷ Resolution of the KPD headquarters of February 14, 1923 with social and political demands, in: Dokumente und Materialien, p. 265.

²⁸ Declaration of the Saxony state executive committee of the KPD for the formation of joint proletarian defense units published on May 3, 1923, in: Dokumente und Materialien, p. 298.

²⁹ See Resolution of the International Workers' Conference of March 17-20, 1923 in Frankfurt (Main) on the struggle against fascism, in: Documents and Materials, p. 287 f.

to fight the threat of military dictatorship, fascism and mass misery. The developing unity of action was also expressed by the entry of Communists into the Social Democratic state governments in Saxony and Thuringia in order to "unite the working class to ward off the fascist danger" together with the Social Democrats.³⁰ The jointly drawn up program of the Thuringian government states that the basis of its policy "must be the safeguarding of the existence of the working population and the most resolute struggle against fascism, revanchist policies, reaction and the unconstitutional military dictatorship".³¹

These results in the struggle for the united front could not be further expanded for various reasons. The influence of the right-wing leaders of the SPD, although it had declined, still proved to be deep enough to prevent the inclusion of all Social Democrats and other proletarian strata in the united struggle. These leaders played down the fascist danger, demanded that all Social Democrats "exercise discipline" and only act when called upon by the party leadership. Even then - and not just in 1933 - the SPD leadership issued the slogan "Be ready!", which amounted to waiting and keeping quiet.³² Under pressure from these right-wing leaders and decisive sections of finance capital, who had included Social Democrats in the new government led by Stresemann and were not yet prepared to give up the bourgeois-parliamentary form of exercising power, and therefore also had the [330] Hitler putsch in Munich crushed, fluctuations among left-wing Social Democratic functionaries and members increased. They again turned away from cooperation with the Communists.

In addition, the KPD overestimated the process of detaching workers and other laborers from reformist ideology, or from bourgeois ideology in general. The KPD was not yet able to "*soberly* examine the *actual* level of consciousness and maturity of the entire class (and not just its communist vanguard), the entire working *masses* (and not just their most advanced representatives)".³³ The communists in the governments of Saxony and Thuringia were unable to sufficiently exploit their positions in a revolutionary sense. Finally, right-wing opportunist and above all ultra-left forces in the KPD proved to be an obstacle that severely hampered the realization of the party's policies.

The support provided by right-wing social democratic leaders of the big bourgeoisie during the period of relative stabilization and especially during the world economic crisis in the struggle against the revolutionary workers' movement, as well as the increasing anti-communism of the social democratic party authorities, which escalated into the slander "Bolshevism and fascism are brothers",³⁴ and culminated in the demand for the "destruction of the KPD down to its unteachable, sectarian remnants"³⁵, not only paralyzed and disoriented millions of workers. They also had to affect the united front policy of the Communists: The KPD concentrated on the united front

"from below". During the global economic crisis, in view of the toleration of the presidential coalition by the right-wing leaders of the SPD, it sought to lead the anti-fascist struggle together with militant social democrats and trade unionists against their will and resistance. From 1930, and increasingly in 1932 with the Antifascist Action, it was possible on a local level to jointly fend off Nazi attacks, protect workers' facilities, prevent fascist demonstrations, hold anti-fascist rallies, which were often prepared by the local leaderships of the KPD, SPD, ADGB and other workers' organizations, and form anti-fascist unity committees, struggle committees and self-protection squads. In some cases

³⁰ Resolution of the KPD headquarters of October 6, 1923, in: Dokumente und Materialien, p. 445.

³¹ Quoted from Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, Vol. 3, Berlin 1966, p. 664, Doc. 155.

³² Appeal of the party executive and the Reichstag faction of the VSPD of September 27, 1923 "To the party!", in: Dokumente und Materialien, Vol. VII/2, p. 436.

³³ V. I. Lenin, Der "linke Radikalismus", die Kinderkrankheit im Kommunismus, in: Lenin, Werke, vol. 31, Berlin 1964, S. 44.

³⁴ Otto Wels' speech at the 1931 party conference, in: Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag in Leipzig 1931 vom 31. Mai bis

5. Juni im Volkshaus. Minutes, Berlin 1931, p. 19.

³⁵ Das Freie Wort, 52/1932, p. 20.

non-party and Christian workers should be involved in the defensive struggles against fascism and the advance of the fascist movement.

However, only a limited number of Social Democrats and trade unionists were prepared to act together with the Communists against the will of their leaders. The leadership of the KPD took this into account. Therefore, in 1932, in view of the intensification of the fascist danger, it sought to reach an agreement with social democratic leaders and the party executive - setting aside all differences of opinion - for a joint stand against fascism. In an appeal dated 25 April, the Central Committee of the KPD and the Reich Committee of the RGO declared their willingness to fight together with every "organization in which workers are united"³⁶ against wage and benefit cuts and against the terror of the Nazi party and its SA. The same efforts are evidenced by the instruction of the Secretariat of the Central Committee on June 4 to take action against the SA with the Reichsbanner,³⁷ the appeal of the leadership of the KPD on July 20 to the SPD, the ADGB, the AfA-Bund and the Christian trade unions to respond to the coup d'état in Prussia with a general strike³⁸, and a similar offer on January 30, 1933 on the occasion of the formation of the Hitler government.³⁹ When the Social Democratic leadership planned a referendum to repeal the Papen emergency decree of September 4, 1932, the Third Party Conference of the KPD in October declared the Communists' willingness to participate in such an action, despite some objections regarding the expediency of a referendum. The Communists also made efforts at regional level - for example the Berlin-Brandenburg, Ruhr and North-West district leaderships - to reach agreements with the leaders and executive committees of the SPD and the ADGB.

These facts prove that it is a gross falsification to claim that the anti-fascist program advocated by the Communists "referred exclusively to the creation of the 'united front from below'".⁴⁰ Apart from the fact that the KPD also addressed the Social Democratic leaders and declared its willingness to cooperate with the SPD as a whole in the interest of warding off the fascist danger, its anti-fascist program did not only have the united front as its object and content. It was considerably more extensive and detailed, as will be explained later. The accusation made in the same place to justify the rejectionist stance of the Social Democratic Party Executive that the KPD's offers of July 1932 and January 1933 were made "only to a limited extent and too late"⁴¹ is also without foundation. In the appeal of July 20, for example, the leadership of the KPD proposed to fight together for the abolition of the state of emergency and the emergency decrees, for the banning of the SA and SS, for the disarmament of the counter-revolution, for unrestricted freedom of assembly, demonstration and the press. This corresponded to the situation, these were the most urgent requirements if fascization and the Nazi movement were to be pushed back. As far as the allegedly late date is concerned, it should be noted that offers to stand up together against the consequences of the Papen coup d'état and for the overthrow of the Hitler government could only be made once the coup had taken place or the Hitler government had been installed.

The KPD also sought to advance the creation of the anti-fascist united front and fend off Nazi advances through its parliamentary policy. In June 1932, for example, it prevented the possible election of a Nazi minister president in the Prussian state parliament in a joint vote with the SPD, Center Party and German State Party, as well as the adoption of an NSDAP motion to impeach the Prussian ministers who belonged to the SPD and the German State Party. At the same time, the KPD offered the SPD and the Center Party - albeit in vain - that it would

³⁶ The Anti-Fascist Action, p. 7.

³⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 77.

³⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 193 f.

³⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 354 ff.

⁴⁰ Soviet System and Democratic Society. A Comparative Encyclopedia, Vol. I, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 1966, p. 226.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, sp. 227.

renounce their own candidates and vote for a presidium of the state parliament composed only of SPD and Center Party representatives in order to prevent the election of fascists. In [332] some city parliaments, Communist factions voted for Social Democratic candidates and prevented the election of Nazis as chairmen.

In addition, the KPD began to eliminate sectarian obstacles and prejudices in its ranks and to free itself from misconceptions that hindered unity of action, such as the terms "little Zörgiebels" and "social fascism". From the internal confrontation with sectarianism, it drew the right conclusions for the further struggle with the aim of bringing about unified action by the working class.

The right-wing leaders of the SPD either did not react to the KPD's proposals at all or rejected them. They were able to do so because the pressure from militant members and functionaries in favor of the united front was never so strong that they had to give in to it. They were able to do so because the number of Social Democrats who recognized the sterility of right-wing Social Democratic politics grew before and especially after the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, but the right-wing leaders kept the party apparatus in their hands and took action against opposition forces with discrimination, blocking of financial resources and exclusion.

Apart from a few exceptions, the right-wing Social Democratic leaders stuck to their "general line" - rejecting an alliance with the Communists in order to remain a coalition partner for certain circles of the bourgeoisie - even during the years of the fascist dictatorship. They publicly declared that an alliance between social democrats and communists would not strengthen the fighting power of the working class, but would compromise social democracy. As far as the fighting power of the working class was concerned, history had long since refuted these anti-communist excuses, however often today's bourgeois and reformist ideologues resort to them. Those who really compromised themselves in the face of history, however, were the Social Democratic Party Executive, which capitulated to the Hitler government and sought to ingratiate itself with it, which regarded its own programs, especially the Prague Manifesto of 1934, which spoke of avoiding the mistakes of 1918 and of the unification of the working class as a compulsion of history, merely as a deceptive maneuver.

On March 1 and 14, 1933, the leadership of the KPD again submitted proposals for joint action to the SPD party executive. This took place at a time when the Hitler regime had by no means stabilized, considerable sections of the membership of the SPD and the ADGB were determined to fight and there was a chance that powerful united action could bring about a turnaround in developments. This step by the Communists was determined by their realization:

"The creation of the fighting united front of the workers is the order of the day, is the vital question of the German working class."⁴² In agreements on joint action, the KPD declared its willingness to reject the demand of Social Democratic leaders for a "non-aggression pact" and to "refrain from any attack on Social Democracy for the time of the joint struggle against capital and fascism".⁴³

For the KPD, the conclusion from the SPD leadership's renewed rejection of these proposals could not be resignation or abandonment of the anti-fascist [333] struggle. Just as before 1933, it could not leave the field to fascism without a fight. Rather, it was necessary to do everything in its power to strengthen the struggle in the interests of the working class in particular, in the interests of freedom and human dignity, and to consolidate and further expand the alliance with all workers willing to fight. The aim was to "strengthen the unity of action of the communist and social democratic workers and the opposition elements among the SA people, the Hitler Youth, the members of the

⁴² "Courageously forward in anti-fascist action!". Appeal of the Central Committee of the KPD from March 1933, in: Rundschau über Politik, Wirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung, 6/1933, p. 137.

⁴³ United Front Offer of the Central Committee of the KPD to the Party Executive Committee of the SPD of March 1933,

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in: Rundschau über Politik, Wirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung, p. 149.

NSBO, the 'Labor Front' and 'Strength through Joy"', as stated in the Central Committee resolution of August 1, 1934.⁴⁴ An important step towards promoting the united front was the leadership's instruction to all communists not only to support efforts by workers in the factories to restore the free trade unions and form corresponding illegal groups, but also to take the initiative in doing so. All RGO groups were to be merged into the new free trade union groups. In order to create illegal trade union unity, "negotiations with the existing social-democratic groups should be started immediately".⁴⁵

In view of the increasing differentiation process in the SPD, the growing rejection of the right-wing leaders' sterile political position without alternatives by functionaries and members, who increasingly called for a new orientation of social democracy and unity of action, the Communist Party sought to ally itself with these forces. These active social democrats, who, like the communists, were persecuted and suppressed by the fascist regime, had to become the core of the anti-fascist united front together with the communists.

In January 1935, the Central Committee again emphasized that first and foremost "understanding and the joint struggle of social democratic and communist workers and organizations" was necessary. It would have the effect that other working classes would join in. The united front must be created through agreements "with all social-democratic workers and functionaries, groups, organizations and local, district and central leaderships".⁴⁶ With regard to the subject of joint agreements, the party leadership recommended starting from the immediate common interests and needs.

From mid-1934 to mid-1935, it was possible to conclude agreements in various areas of Germany, for example between the district leaderships of both parties in the Saar region, in Baden and in Hesse-Frankfurt, between the district leadership of Rote Hilfe and the Social Democratic district leadership in Berlin, between local leaderships in Hanover, Bremen, Dortmund, Zeitz and in other individual cities in northern and eastern Germany. If one analyses the content of the agreements, it becomes clear that the most urgent requirements formed the basis: to publish joint appeals to the working people for a united struggle to enforce their daily demands; to carry out resistance actions in the factories; to form committees for the release of political prisoners and to support their relatives; to create illegal trade union groups; to carry out anti-fascist work in the mass organizations of the Nazis [334]; to take joint action in the elections of workers' councils; to agree on the defence against informers.

At the same time, members of the leadership of the KPD entered into a dialog with leaders of the Revolutionary Socialists who had spoken out in favour of anti-fascist unity of action, conducted in press organs that appeared in emigration countries and were also distributed illegally in Germany. In February, April and June 1935, the Central Committee approached the Social Democratic emigration committee in Prague with proposals to discuss joint measures on the occasion of the elections to the Confidence Councils and the introduction of general conscription in Germany, as well as to support victims of fascist terror. While the emigration board again refused, social democrats, former ADGB members and also non-party workers came together with communists to take joint action.⁴⁷

The Brussels Conference in October 1935 concluded the process of developing the united front policy directed against the fascist dictatorship. As a prerequisite for the overthrow of the Hitler regime, the conference described "the establishment of the unity of action of all sections of the German working class".⁴⁸ The conference defined the general starting point and the main content of the

⁴⁴ Die Schaffung der Einheitsfront der werktätigen Massen im Kampfe gegen die Hitlerdiktatur, in: Rundschau über Politik, Wirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung, 45/1934, p. 1867.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Proletarian united front and anti-fascist popular front to overthrow the fascist dictatorship. Resolution of the Central

Committee of the KPD of January 30, 1935, in: Rundschau über Politik, Wirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung, 10/1935, p. 553.

⁴⁷ See Klaus Mammach, Die deutsche antifaschistische Widerstandsbewegung 1933-1939, Berlin 1974, p. 63 ff.

⁴⁸ The Brussels Conference of the KPD (October 3-15, 1935), ed. and in. by Klaus Mammach, Berlin 1975, p. 588.

Unity of action of the working class means the struggle "for the constant defense of their immediate economic and political interests", "for the improvement of their wage and working conditions and against fascist oppression".⁴⁹ Since social democracy was also being persecuted and had been forced into a fighting position against the fascist regime, this created a new relationship between the two parties and required unity of action "between the two parties, their organizations and members".⁵⁰ In order to bring this about, all sectarian obstacles in the ranks of the KPD had to be removed, but also all attempts by right-wing social democratic leaders to prevent the united front had to be combated. At the same time, the conference emphasized that unity of action did not mean abolishing the political and organizational independence of the SPD; it did not mean that the Social Democrats had to subordinate themselves to the Communists - assertions that are still circulated today by bourgeois and Social Democratic historians.

In the following years, communists and social democrats, former ADGB members, Christian-oriented and non-party workers united in joint resistance actions in the factories and fascist mass organizations against rearmament and terrorist oppression, for the enforcement of social demands and political rights. A close fighting community formed in the penitentiaries and concentration camps. Communists and social democrats in particular worked side by side against Hitler's fascism in some emigration countries. In Spain, they fought together in the International Brigades. In the course of the Second World War, communist party organizations made contact with social democratic groups and individual social democrats. Some of these Social Democrats joined the resistance organizations led by the KPD. Together, in [335] the last weeks of the war, determined action in many German towns and villages prevented further senseless destruction and casualties.

In addition, it was also possible to initiate negotiations between representatives of the Central Committee of the KPD and leading social democrats, for example in November 1935 between members of the Politburo and the emigration committee in Prague or in June and July 1943 between leading functionaries of the KPD organization and the Union of German Socialist Organizations in Great Britain. There were occasional collaborations with leading social democrats, for example with Rudolf Breitscheid in Paris from 1935 to 1937 and with leading functionaries of the Working Committee of German Socialists and the Revolutionary Socialists of Austria in the spring of 1939. Attempts at collaboration between Franz Jacob and Anton Saefkow, members of the operational leadership of the KPD in Germany, and the Social Democratic functionaries Julius Leber and Adolf Reichwein in Berlin in the summer of 1944 were crushed by arrests.

Of historical significance was the long and sacrificial struggle, especially in Germany itself, waged by communists and a number of social democratic members and functionaries as well as other class-conscious workers against the fascist dictatorship. As the Bern Conference of the KPD had predicted at the beginning of 1939, the preconditions for "finally eliminating the division of the German working class and fulfilling the longing of the German workers for the creation of a unified party of the German working class" were growing.⁵¹

3. Alliance policy

The 8th Party Congress drew attention to the fact that the petty bourgeoisie - disappointed by the results of social democratic politics - was turning to the fascist movement in the belief that it would be able to stop its impoverishment and political disenfranchisement. In contrast, the Communists emphasized that the salvation of the petty bourgeoisie from annihilation by the big bourgeoisie could not be brought about by turning away from the working class, but "could only be achieved in the

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 588 f.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 589.

⁵¹ Die Berner Konferenz der KPD (January 30-February 1, 1939), ed. and in. by Klaus Mammach, Berlin 1974, p. 142.

common struggle with the working class against big capital".⁵² The proletariat would then stop and push back the "rising wave of fascism" "if in this struggle it ruthlessly defends the interests of the perishing petty bourgeoisie at the expense of the big bourgeoisie".⁵³ Based on this realization, the party congress formulated a number of demands that corresponded to the interests of civil servants and employees and to which it committed all communists.⁵⁴

A little later, the KPD turned to the small farmers to warn them against the fascists and to make it clear to them that their place was alongside the working class if they wanted to change their social situation and defend and extend their democratic rights and freedoms.⁵⁵ The advice given by the party leadership to its members in [336] July 1923 to join forces with the "impoverished small traders"⁵⁶ and the appeal "To the working middle class, to the civil servants and farmers of Germany"⁵⁷ not to allow themselves to be abused and incited against the working class also contained a correct alliance policy orientation. However, the demands made by the party were still not detailed enough to tie in with the immediate interests of these classes and convince them of the need for joint action; general political slogans still predominated.

The "Guidelines of the Central Committee of the KPD of August 5, 1923 for political mass work among the middle classes" represented a step forward, in which the basic conditions for winning the petty bourgeoisie as allies were stated: "1. the working class must make itself the leader of the national liberation struggle. 2. the working class must actively take up the social interests of the petty bourgeoisie against big capital."⁵⁸ This shows that the leadership of the KPD had recognized how to counter the national and social demagoguery of the fascists, how to push back their ideological influence and how to make the petty bourgeoisie understand on whose side it had a future. In the guidelines, the Central Committee set out a number of demands for "liberation from oppressive burdens" and for "securing the existence of the middle classes", gave instructions on how the Communists should work among the various petty-bourgeois classes and even appear at fascist meetings in order to win over the middle classes for joint action with the proletariat or to free them from fascist influence. The Central Committee demanded that party members overcome "existing prejudices" against the petty bourgeoisie.⁵⁹ This political line corresponded to Lenin's demand to "unite with the broadest masses of the working people, primarily with the proletariat, *but also with the non-proletarian* working masses, to draw closer to them, indeed, if one wishes, to merge with them to a certain extent".⁶⁰

However, it proved extremely difficult to overcome the petty bourgeoisie's deep-rooted reservations about the proletariat and the influence of the various varieties of bourgeois ideology on this intermediate class and to lead larger sections into the struggle. It is true that members of the middle classes took part in actions against hunger and inflation and in the mass movement to overthrow the Cuno government. However, it was considerably more difficult to win them over to the fight against fascism. It was not possible to draw them to the side of the revolutionary workers for any length of time.

⁵² Resolution on the political situation and the next tasks of the proletariat, in: Dokumente und Materialien, Vol. VII/2, p. 243.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 244.

⁵⁴ See Resolution on the Civil Service Question, in: Documents and Materials, p. 259 f.

⁵⁵ See the appeal of the Land Department of the KPD headquarters from March 17, 1923 "To the working rural people!", in: Dokumente und Materialien, p. 272 ff.

⁵⁶ Appeal of the KPD headquarters of July 11, 1923 "To the party!", in: Documents and Materials, p. 365.

⁵⁷ Appeal of the KPD headquarters of July 25, 1923, in: Dokumente und Materialien, p. 373 ff.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 383.

⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 284 ff.

⁶⁰ Lenin, 'Left-Wing Radicalism ...' in Lenin: Works, vol. 31, p. 9.

The realization of the alliance policy turned out to be complicated in the practice of the class struggle. The KPD had to take into account that it was a lengthy process to overcome the traditional vacillation of the middle strata and to form the alliance. It had to take into account that the speed and scope of this process depended on certain situations and conditions of the class struggle. An intensification of the contradiction between finance capital and the popular masses created more favorable possibilities for establishing the alliance, but it could only become a reality if subjective factors also became effective. Thus the alliance depended, among other things, on a certain level of realization among the middle classes of the danger of fascism. They had to gain this knowledge on the basis of their own experience before it led them to take active action on the side of the working class. This was all the more likely to be achieved the more resolutely the proletariat acted in unity of action.

Furthermore, the Communists always had to bear in mind that, apart from the necessary objective conditions for the alliance, their ability, patience, sensitivity and persuasiveness were essential. This included the fact that the Communists not only made the justified demands of the peasants, craftsmen, tradesmen, civil servants and members of the intelligentsia their own, but that they also knew how to organize the day-to-day struggle for their implementation. This included the fact that the communists overcame all prejudices, knew how to make compromises and create a relationship of mutual trust. The revolutionary party of the working class must always bear in mind that such a powerful opponent as the fascist big bourgeoisie can only be defeated if, in Lenin's words, "every opportunity, even the smallest one, is exploited to win an ally among the masses, even if it is a temporary, vacillating, uncertain, unreliable, conditional ally".⁶¹

During the period of the global economic crisis, the KPD made further progress in developing and implementing its anti-fascist alliance policy. As early as June 1929, the 12th Party Congress had described the "neglect of propaganda among the petty-bourgeois and small peasant classes, which became a recruiting ground for the fascists" as one of the main shortcomings of the party's work and called for "energetic activity among the craftsmen, tradesmen, small traders, savers, small pensioners, war victims, intellectuals, etc.". ⁶² "In particular, the party must devote much greater attention to the interests of the working peasant masses (on the question of land, tenancy conditions, customs duties and taxes, inflation, credit, etc.), strengthen and systematize the work among these masses in order to free them from bourgeois and fascist influence and unite the struggle of the poor peasants with the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat under the leadership of the KPD." ⁶³ In addition, as the party leadership emphasized in June 1930, it was necessary, through the offensive confrontation with fascist ideology "to detach broader layers of members, supporters, followers and voters from the fascist movement". ⁶⁴

With the program for national and social liberation, the farmers' aid program⁶⁵ and the job creation plan⁶⁶, the KPD also sought to meet the interests of the middle classes. In the daily class struggle, also in the parliaments, the Communists struggled to assert the social and democratic concerns of these classes and to mobilize broader circles against emergency decree policies, fascization and the Hitler movement. The KPD achieved a certain progress in cooperation with members of the middle classes, the peasantry and the intelligentsia in [338] the form of the Anti-Fascist Action, which was launched in the spring of 1932 with the aim of "uniting the masses to fight against Hitler fascism,

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 56 f.

⁶² Resolution on the political situation and the tasks of the KPD, in: Dokumente und Material, Vol. VIII, p. 836, p. 839.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 839.

⁶⁴ Resolution on the fight against fascism, in: Die Rote Fahne, No. 137, 15.6.1930.

⁶⁵ See History of the German Labor Movement, vol. 4, Berlin 1966, p. 545 ff., Doc. 78.

⁶⁶ See ibid., p. 547 ff., Doc. 79.

to block Hitler fascism's path to government power, to bring the rising wave of Hitler fascism to a halt and to strike back".⁶⁷

The Reichstag election in November 1932, in which the party won over 600,000 votes and received a total of almost six million, was a reflection of the increasing influence of KPD politics. One in six voters voted for them. However, the Nazi Party, which lost two million votes, still received eleven million, and the German National People's Party three million votes. The majority of the petty bourgeoisie followed the fascists, misled by their anti-capitalist demagoguery and nationalism. Only a minority joined the struggle of the most advanced sections of the working class to prevent a fascist dictatorship.

After the establishment of the Hitler government, the KPD had to evaluate the knowledge it had gained to date under considerably more complicated conditions, review its alliance policy and develop it further. It generalized experiences in joint action with Catholic opponents of Hitler in the Ruhr area, in the initiated cooperation between Communists, Social Democrats and Christians in the Saar region for the preservation of the status quo and against the annexation of Hitler's Germany, and drew conclusions from the experiences of the French Communist Party in the struggle for a popular front in France. On the occasion of the referendum scheduled for August 19, 1934 on the law to unite the offices of Reich President and Reich Chancellor, the Central Committee of the KPD called for the formation of an anti-fascist popular front: "We Communists turn to all enemies of Hitler's dictatorship, to all Social Democrats, trade unionists, to all Christian working people, to all groups and organizations who are prepared to fight against fascism, to join us in building the great anti-fascist unity of struggle, the popular front against Hitler, against the fascist dictatorship of capital."⁶⁸

In mid-January 1935, the Political Secretariat of the ECCI encouraged the leadership of the KPD in this line and, after a detailed discussion of the situation and the conditions of struggle in Germany, recommended finding ways and means to organize a broad popular front against Hitler, to strive for an alliance of Communist, Social Democratic and Christian workers, farmers, "dissatisfied elements of the urban middle classes" and intellectuals.⁶⁹ This recommendation meant that one had to go one step further and expand the circle of social forces mentioned in the appeal on the occasion of the referendum, which were to be won over for a common struggle.

In its resolution of 30 January 1935, the Central Committee of the KPD named the anti-fascist work of the Communists and other anti-fascists in the Nazi mass organizations such as the Labour Front, Hitler Youth, SA, Labour Service, sports clubs and rural aid as a prerequisite for uniting the broadest popular strata in the Popular Front: "Wherever masses are organized and come together ..., the communists and all anti-fascists must be on hand to organize the opposition to Hitler fascism."⁷⁰ In these organizations, the communists were to oppose the appointed leaders and the "leader principle", assert the right to freedom of expression and criticism, to the election of leaders by the members and to control the use of membership fees.

The Central Committee expected every communist to pay "special attention" to the daily demands of farmers, the urban middle class and the intelligentsia and formulated a program of struggle in its resolution. For the small and medium-sized farmers, it demanded, among other things, the elimination of all tax arrears, the reduction of feed prices at the expense of the wholesale trade, the reduction of rent, long-term interest-free loans for the purchase of seed, fertilizer and livestock, the lifting of the ban on self-slaughter for personal sale and the permission to sell their livestock.

⁶⁷ Circular from the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the KPD dated June 4, 1932, in: Die Antifaschistische Aktion, p. 66.

⁶⁸ Quoted from Mammach, Die deutsche antifaschistische Widerstandsbewegung p. 76.

⁶⁹ See IML/ZPA, 135/2/1800.

⁷⁰ Proletarian united front and anti-fascist popular front to overthrow the fascist dictatorship, in: Rundschau über Politik, Wirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung, 10/1935, p. 554.

for self-marketing with all products. Demands for the urban middle classes included tax exemption for incomes of up to 3,000 marks a year and for assets of up to 20,000 marks, the abolition of beer, slaughter, civic and salt taxes, the abolition of compulsory levies and the reduction of rent for one- to three-room apartments and small stores. In favor of the intelligentsia, an end was demanded to the reprimanding of artists and scholars and the snooping of opinions, the independence of science and art, the elimination of dilettantism and protection. The leadership of the KPD called on all working people to stand up for democratic rights, including freedom of assembly and the press, the inviolability of the person and the home, protection from denunciation and persecution, the abolition of concentration camps and so-called protective custody.

This program was based on the immediate social and democratic needs and demands of various sections of the population. The common interest of the working class and other sections of the population in overcoming political lawlessness and fascist un-culture, in improving their social situation, in regaining democratic rights and freedoms and in preventing a war triggered by Hitler's Germany was the objective basis of a broad alliance that the KPD was striving for.

The Brussels conference answered the question of the allies of the working class in the struggle to overcome the fascist dictatorship more comprehensively than before. It was not only necessary to organize the joint struggle of workers, small and medium-sized farmers, craftsmen, tradesmen and members of the intelligentsia. It was also necessary to get in touch and work together with forces of the former Centre Party, whose "influence would reach deep into the petty-bourgeois camp and bourgeois circles", as well as with "other groups and associations that have always or through the party course of the Hitler government and the entire government practice of the NSDAP stood in opposition to the Hitler government and its measures". These were groups of former popular conservatives, in which bourgeois forces from rural areas had gathered "who were resolutely opposed to Hitler's methods and were striving for a change in political conditions in Germany".⁷¹ These were German nationalists "who would not allow themselves to be brought into line, who were outraged by Hitler's breaches of his word and who were driven into an even stronger position of opposition by the Stahlhelm bans".⁷²

[340] This broad conception of anti-fascist alliance politics was based on the assumption that, despite all the demagogic propaganda, the policies of the regime did not correspond to the true interests of broad, non-monopolistic circles of the people. With this conception, the KPD took into account the processes of differentiation that were beginning to take place in the face of differences of opinion on political and economic policy measures in the bourgeoisie and in the face of the state-monopoly development in the petty bourgeoisie. These phenomena and processes formed the objective basis for the expansion of the alliance conception. This conception was intended to bring together all those forces that rejected Hitler and the Nazi Party, regardless of their world view and social position, regardless of their political knowledge and view of the organization of social relations after Hitler. To overthrow him and thus secure peace in the vital interests of the German people, to eliminate terror, persecution and oppression, to restore democratic rights and freedoms - that was the first and foremost concern of the KPD.

It was emphasized at the Bern conference that the Popular Front should not be a temporary, limited alliance that would be dissolved after the fall of the fascist government. Rather, it should continue to exist afterwards on the basis of joint action and common interests and be consolidated in the struggle to reshape society. At the Berne Conference it was pointed out that the workers and other working people had potential allies in the struggle against Hitler: Parts of the bourgeoisie, with whom they had for so long

⁷¹ Report by Wilhelm Florin, in: The Brussels Conference of the KPD, p. 247.

⁷² Ibid., p. 248.

The question was how the interests of these anti-Nazi forces could coincide with the goals of the anti-fascist working people.

Popular front politics did not mean Weimar-style coalition politics. It was fundamentally different in its content, form and goals. It was determined by the coinciding objective interests of the majority of the people and not by the class-egoistic interests of a monopoly capitalist minority. Popular front politics was aimed at achieving democratic goals and not at supporting the undemocratic rule of a minority.

The KPD increasingly developed initiatives for joint action by the various anti-Hitler forces. This is evidenced, for example, by the proposals made by the party leadership in July 1935 to the party organization in the Free City of Gdansk to create a popular front with the Social Democrats and the Centre Party to overthrow the Nazi state, as well as the flexible tactics with regard to a possible popular front government, which the leadership recommended the Gdansk Communists to pursue.⁷³ The negotiations between Communists and functionaries of the SPD, the SAP and the Center Party with bourgeois-democratic writers, journalists and academics, which led to the formation of Popular Front committees in Paris and Metz in 1935/36 and 1937 respectively, bear witness to this. Hitler's opponents of various political persuasions and social backgrounds were also active in associations such as the "Free German Cultural Association" in Great Britain.

On various occasions, the Communists in Germany were also able to establish cooperation with non-proletarian opponents of Hitler, mostly with members of the intelligentsia, occasionally also with small businessmen and farmers. The larger party organizations that emerged in 1938/39 succeeded, especially after the beginning of the war, in involving members of the intelligentsia and the middle classes in the anti-fascist struggle alongside Social Democrats and former ADGB members, and in this way forming larger resistance organizations, for example in Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig, in Munich and Mannheim, in cities in the Ruhr area, in Cologne and Szczecin.⁷⁴

The KPD reached a new stage in the realization of its anti-fascist alliance policy with the creation of the "Free Germany" National Committee in July 1943, which united workers, employees, farmers, members of the middle class, the intelligentsia and professional soldiers of various political and ideological persuasions to stand together for the salvation of the German nation from the catastrophe brought about by fascism. The developing "Free Germany" movement in various emigration countries had a similar composition. In Germany itself, this movement was unable to achieve such a broad composition due to the fascist terror and the profound influence of Nazi ideology and propaganda.

Towards the end of the war, the party's alliance policy was further developed in the "Action Program of the Bloc of Militant Democracy", which the leadership of the KPD drafted in October 1944. This bloc, to be created after the destruction of fascism, was to include "all organizations, parties, groups and individuals" who would "fight for the salvation of Germany through the destruction of fascist-imperialist reaction and (for) the establishment of a democratic people's regime".⁷⁵ This concept took real shape when the bloc of anti-fascist-democratic parties was formed on July 14, 1945.

⁷³ See Siegfried Vietzke, *Die KPD auf dem Weg zur Brüsseler Konferenz*, Berlin 1966, p. 196 ff.

⁷⁴ See Mammach, *Die deutsche antifaschistische Widerstandsbewegung*, p. 151 ff.; *Deutschland im zweiten Weltkrieg*, Bd. 1: Vorbereitung, Entfesselung und Verlauf des Krieges bis zum 22. Juni 1941, edited by Gerhart Hass, Berlin 1974, p. 280 ff.; Bd. 2: Vom Überfall auf die Sowjetunion bis zur sowjetischen Gegenoffensive bei Stalingrad (Juni 1941 bis November 1942), directed by Karl Drechsler with the collaboration of Klaus Drobisch and Wolfgang Schumann, Berlin 1975, p. 220 ff.; Detlev Peukert, *Ruhrarbeiter gegen den Faschismus. Dokumentation über den Widerstand im Ruhrgebiet 1933- 1945*, Frankfurt a. M. 1976, p. 275 ff.

⁷⁵ Horst Laschitz, *Zwei Dokumente der KPD aus den Jahren 1944 und 1945 für das neue, demokratische Deutschland*, in: *BzG*, 2/1965, p. 261.

4. Forms of anti-fascist struggle under the conditions of illegality

From the very beginning, the KPD oriented the working class and other anti-fascist forces towards the use of the most diverse forms and methods in the fight against fascism - not indiscriminately, but based on the given conditions and adapted to the respective balance of power of the classes. In the years of the Weimar Republic, this struggle included above all agitational and propagandistic education about the character and aims of the fascist movement, demonstrations, rallies and strikes, the work of unity committees, control and struggle committees, actions of the proletarian hundred, the Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus and the anti-fascist mass self-protection. The general strike proposed by the KPD in particularly acute situations of class struggle could not become effective due to the hostile attitude of the Social Democratic and trade union leaderships.

[342] After the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, it was necessary to examine which previous forms of struggle could also be used under the new conditions and which new methods had to be tried out.

Even before 1933, the KPD had already taken measures to set up an illegal printing and distribution apparatus.⁷⁶ Immediately after its press was banned in February 1933, it was therefore able to produce newspapers and magazines illegally and distribute them via a well-organized distribution system. The first printed illegal edition of the "Rote Fahne" appeared in mid-March 1933 with a circulation of around 300,000 copies. Produced in various cities in Germany, the Netherlands, France and Czechoslovakia, the central organ was published regularly once to three times a month until the start of the war. The circulation was around 50,000 copies per issue until 1935 and around 30,000 in the following years. Under the conditions of illegality and persecution, this was an extraordinary achievement, in which many members and functionaries of both the KPD and brother parties participated and which demanded many sacrifices. For a while, some district leaderships were also able to publish newspapers illegally.

The KPD also distributed leaflets and tracts, hectographed company and block newspapers, camouflage pamphlets on a wide variety of topics, brochures with resolutions by the party leadership, speeches by leading functionaries at consultations and conferences as well as writings on experiences in the anti-fascist struggle and on the domestic and foreign policy of the Hitler regime. The documents, which were often printed abroad, were brought to Germany illegally by anti-fascists from various nations with rucksacks or suitcases, by train, truck or ship, even in tin cans. Communists, social democrats and bourgeois-democratic opponents of Hitler addressed the German population via the German Freedom Station on shortwave 29.8, which had been operated by the KPD on Spanish soil since January 1937.

How the KPD endeavored to make its propaganda as differentiated as possible can be seen, for example, in a list from the Northern Section of the Central Committee of the KPD, which was based in Copenhagen. According to this list, in 1938 the Communists produced and distributed the following in the area of the North and Baltic Sea coasts for which this leadership was responsible: 18 leaflets, 40 radio lectures and five letters addressed to the entire population; four leaflets, 30 lectures and two letters were addressed to the working class; five leaflets, nine lectures and one letter to the farmers; 40 lectures, and five letters to the youth; 14 lectures and four letters to women; one leaflet and seven lectures to craftsmen and tradesmen; four lectures and two letters to merchants; four lectures to sportsmen; one leaflet and one lecture to SA people.⁷⁷

Under the conditions of the war, it was hardly possible to produce newspapers and extensive publications. Nevertheless, the communists made corresponding efforts. This is evidenced, for example, by an edition of the "Berliner Volkszeitung", three typewritten

⁷⁶ See Jürgen Stroeck, *Die illegale Presse - eine Waffe im Kampf gegen den deutschen Faschismus. A contribution to the history and bibliography of the illegal anti-fascist press 1933 to 1939*, phil. Diss., Berlin 1974, p. 37 ff.

⁷⁷ See IML/ZPA, 3/20/415.

issues of the "Rote Fahne", four issues of the "Vorbote", eleven issues of the "Friedenskämpfer", around four and ten issues of the "Freiheit" and the "Ruhr-Echo" respectively. Above all, the KPD used printed and hectographed leaflets to spread the truth, seeking to awaken [343] or promote the conviction that the fascist regime had to be overthrown and the war of conquest ended. The Deutsche Volkssender and, from 1943, the "Freies Deutschland" radio station had been operating from Soviet territory since 1941 and 1943 respectively. In the Soviet Union, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and other territories occupied by Hitler fascism, German communists, supported by their respective brother parties, addressed the members of the Wehrmacht in newspapers and leaflets in order to convince them of the hypocrisy of the fascist anti-Soviet agitation and to call on them to stop fighting and join the resistance movement.

Of all the anti-Nazi forces, the KPD had the largest share of anti-Fascist propaganda. Of the 607 titles of illegal press organs identified so far for the years from 1933 to 1939 alone, 449 were published by the KPD or its affiliated organizations; 29 organs founded by the KPD were continued as united or popular front organs together with non-communist anti-fascists. In contrast, there were 40 titles published by the SPD or social democratic organizations such as Neu Beginnen, ISK and SAP, 20 organs published by members of various splinter parties or groups, and eleven titles by bourgeois opponents of Hitler.⁷⁸

With their written and oral agitation and propaganda, the German Communists sought to counteract the fascist manipulation of the masses. Even if, compared to the powerful propaganda machinery of the Hitler regime, their influence could only be small and they only reached a small part of the German people, the KPD's educational work created the opportunity for a considerable number of citizens to inform themselves truthfully and to think about their own future and that of the entire nation. The KPD's propaganda showed anti-fascists and opponents of the war the way and the goal in their struggle and strengthened them in their determination to fight. It helped to win over new resistance fighters and prompted some citizens to distance themselves from the Nazi regime.

Using demonstrations and rallies as a form of struggle was generally only possible in the first weeks of the fascist dictatorship. Emergency decrees, terror by the police and SA as well as surveillance by the Gestapo prevented this in the following period. Under the given conditions, the KPD abandoned this form in order not to expose anti-fascists unprotected to the persecuting authorities. If the local situation was favorable, communists and other anti-fascists carried out so-called flying demonstrations, e.g. against the "National Labor Day" and against the Reichstag fire trial in 1933: the platoons of demonstrators only moved through a street for a short time and then dispersed. When the police arrived, no one could be arrested. Isolated demonstrations also took place in the second half of the 1930s.

When preparing and initiating strikes, the KPD also focused on a considered approach, on careful consideration of expediency so as not to endanger anti-fascists. Communists and other workers used this form of struggle in particular when a large number of workers, such as the workforce of several company departments or an entire company or construction site, decided to go on strike - this was repeatedly demonstrated in the struggle to improve social conditions, and occasionally also in the dismissal or arrest of colleagues. Mostly strikes of a few hours, rarely of a few days, were used to defend themselves against wage reductions and longer working hours in individual companies, on sections of highway and on construction sites of military objects, e.g. the Westwall - in a number of cases with success. In general, the number of workers taking part in strikes did not exceed one hundred. Some strikes involved several hundred workers, a few more than 1000.

⁷⁸ See Stroeck, p. 222.

It turned out that it was possible to hold strikes even under the fascist dictatorship. Even if they were only partially successful and were usually ended by force by the organs of terror, they testify to the determination to fight of the advanced section of the working class, to the fact that it did not allow itself to be misled by the social demagoguery of the regime.

The exceptional legislation and increased surveillance after the start of the war made it even more dangerous and difficult to carry out strikes. Nevertheless, tens of thousands of workers stopped work for short periods during the war to assert their demands. For example, 18,900 German workers were arrested for this reason between January and September 1943 and over 12,000 in the first half of 1944.⁷⁹

Similar forms of resistance, especially in the 1930s, included refusing to work Sunday shifts and overtime, stopping work before the end of a shift and refusing to be forced to build military objects for "health reasons". Similar "violations of work discipline" also occurred during the war. In the first half of 1943 alone, 14,000 German workers were sentenced for this.

Anti-fascist work in paramilitary formations such as the Labor Service and the SA as well as work in the Wehrmacht became more important than before.⁸⁰ Some of their camps had to be disbanded due to the resistance of the labor service members to the poor living conditions and the harassment of their leaders. Actions of a purely political nature also took place: against the wearing of swastika armbands, increasing militarization and forced participation in Nazi events. After the introduction of compulsory labour service for all young men in 1935 and after the military reorganization and increased fascist orientation, anti-fascist activity in the RAD became almost impossible.

In the SA, the KPD disseminated anti-fascist writings in the 1930s. However, it was not possible to form communist cells there beyond connections to individual opposition SA members and to gain influence over a larger number of SA members. Arrests of communists and other anti-fascists who worked in this direction, but above all the ideological state of the vast majority of SA members, prevented this.

Anti-fascist work in the Wehrmacht was even more difficult. Especially after the introduction of general conscription, communists agitated among soldiers, the KPD distributed pamphlets in Wehrmacht units, and anti-fascist workers and craftsmen who were employed in military facilities tried to make contact with soldiers. However, it was not possible to create an illegal organization in the Wehrmacht, as the Brussels Conference had demanded.⁸¹ Only in the course of the Second World War was it possible to form illegal anti-fascist groups in Wehrmacht units, for example in the Soviet Union, France, Denmark and Greece.⁸² These groups of Hitler opponents of various ideologies, which occasionally included officers, cautiously carried out anti-fascist propaganda. They circumvented orders, did not carry out ordered measures and occasionally practiced sabotage. They often worked together with the resistance or partisan movement in the country concerned. They passed on important information to them, warned them of planned operations and procured weapons, ammunition and medicines for them. Various Wehrmacht groups joined this movement after deserting.

⁷⁹ See IML/ZPA, St. 3/100, vol. 1; Wolfgang Bleyer/Karl Drechsler/Gerhard Förster/Gerhart Hass, Deutschland von 1939 bis 1945 (Deutschland während des zweiten Weltkrieges), Berlin 1975, p. 362.

⁸⁰ See Paul Heider, Antifaschistischer Kampf und revolutionäre Militärpolitik. Zur Militärpolitik der KPD von 1933 bis 1939 im Kampf gegen Faschismus und Kriegsvorbereitung, für Frieden, Demokratie und Sozialismus, Berlin 1976.

⁸¹ See The Brussels Conference of the KPD, p. 265.

⁸² See, for example, In den Wäldern Belorusslands. Erinnerungen sowjetischer Partisanen und deutscher Antifaschisten, Berlin 1976; Karlheinz Pech, An der Seite der Résistance. Zum Kampf der Bewegung "Freies Deutschland" für den Westen in Frankreich (1943-1945), Berlin 1974; Max Spangenberg, Antifaschistischer Kampf deutscher Kommunisten in Dänemark, in: BzG, 4/1977, p. 617 ff.

Small resistance groups also formed in individual units stationed in Germany, especially after the defeat at Stalingrad, which supported prisoners of war, for example in Munich, Fallingbomel and Bergen-Belsen. Towards the end of the war, communists and other members of resistance groups in some German cities were able to use their activities to persuade Volkssturm units to stop fighting or not to take up the fight at all, not to carry out recommended demolitions of important objects, to render weapons unusable and to desert. In some places, there were groups of anti-fascists in the Volkssturm itself who worked with the same goal.

In solidarity actions for the victims of Hitler's terror, in which the international communist and democratic movement took an active part, the KPD was able to involve members of various classes and social strata. These actions included collecting money to support those arrested or imprisoned and their families, procuring accommodation, food, clothing and false passports or other identity papers for persecuted and illegally living anti-fascists and racially persecuted people, and preparing and supporting the escape of opponents of Hitler who were threatened with arrest. This included various forms of solidarity in prisons and concentration camps, from giving a piece of bread to particularly malnourished or isolated prisoners to helping them escape. The imprisoned anti-fascists also used the positions they held in the prisoner and camp administrations for this purpose. During the war, German anti-fascists procured food, clothing, tobacco products and medicines for prisoners of war and forced laborers, enabled them to listen to foreign radio stations, forwarded mail to their relatives and received letters and parcels for them. On various occasions, German opponents of Hitler helped prisoners of war and forced laborers to escape from the camps. In the first half of 1943, 10,700 German citizens were arrested for "forbidden contact" with them.⁸³

[346] The inclusion of millions of Germans in mass organizations gave rise to a new form of struggle: anti-fascist activity in the Labour Front. It required the communists to overcome their own reservations and, under certain circumstances, to take on lower-level functions themselves. The leadership of the KPD emphasized that this was not a defection, but a requirement dictated by the conditions if they wanted to mobilize broader layers of working people for the struggle. In this kind of anti-fascist activity, illegal and legal methods of resistance could often be combined. Meetings of the Labor Front were used by communists and other anti-fascists to ask the leadership "uncomfortable questions" and, based on promises and social-demagogic statements by the DAF leadership, to push through certain demands. For example, additional shifts in mining, overtime in factories and the compulsory weekly deduction of a "donation" for the Winterhilfswerk from wages could be prevented by voting. Disguised as members of the Labor Front, communists, social democrats and trade unionists were able to form illegal free trade union groups in the 1930s, which offered resistance in the Reichsbahn, in mining, among dockworkers and seamen, and in the metal, construction, wood and graphics industries. Communists, Social Democrats and former workers' sportsmen and women were also active in various sports clubs in an anti-fascist spirit. They illegally transported publications, provided courier services and helped persecuted opponents of Hitler to flee abroad. Lower positions in the NSV were used to support solidarity campaigns for anti-fascists. During the war, a number of resistance groups of young communists and social democrats were formed in the so-called NS community "Strength through Joy" - disguised as sports and hiking groups.

New forms of struggle were slow work and sabotage, as they could contribute to disrupting or in some way impairing armaments production in some factories. Resistance in the form of slow work was offered by workers in the armaments industry as well as dock workers and railroad workers transporting goods important to armaments and construction workers building military facilities. Sabotage required extraordinary caution on the part of the anti-fascists because it

⁸³ See IML/ZPA, St. 3/100, Vol. I.

was punished particularly severely. This form of struggle was also used by anti-fascists in the labor detachments of the concentration camps. During the war, workers deliberately wasted material or destroyed it. By not adhering to specified production times, motor vehicles, weapons and other equipment intended for the Wehrmacht could only be delivered late. Scrap was produced in the manufacture of bombs, grenades and optical devices. Although these and similar actions never seriously jeopardized the fascist war machine, they did lead to partial disruptions on a local scale, which damaged production and transport.

Another form of resistance struggle was scouting for the Soviet Union. It served to weaken the fascist regime and its conduct of the war. At the same time, it was a contribution to the defense of the USSR. German anti-fascists such as Arvid Harnack and Harro Schulze-Boysen had already passed on information about Hitler's preparations for war to the Soviet Union in the mid and late 1930s. In view of the increasingly obvious danger of an invasion of the USSR, they intensified this activity with the support of a larger circle of anti-fascists. Alongside them, alongside Richard Sorge and other scouts

[347] and scout groups consisting of German communists and other anti-fascists, members of party and resistance organizations, including in Berlin, Chemnitz and Zittau, reported to the Soviet Union organs in various ways about armament measures, troop movements and the planned date of the attack by Hitler's Germany. Communists enlisted in the Wehrmacht and other anti-fascists who left their units stationed on the border and made their way into Soviet territory also communicated the date of the impending aggression.

Groups from the front organization of the NKFD provided scouting services, crossing the Soviet-German front and gathering information in the hinterland. A number of German opponents of Hitler in the Wehrmacht also carried out scouting activities to a certain extent, informing the partisan and resistance movements in France, Greece, Poland and other occupied countries about intended actions and operations, the strength and armament of their units and formations, for example. A number of German opponents of Hitler passed on information to the military offices of the Western Allies and civilian-led armed units in occupied countries.

With the growing number of prisoners of war and foreign forced laborers, many of whom took up the fight against the Hitler regime, the German communists and the other anti-fascists associated with them were compelled by proletarian internationalism to seek contact and initiate joint action. In many places and factories, a solid community of struggle developed, uniting members of different nationalities and ideological and political beliefs. In various places, fixed organizational forms of this community of struggle emerged. On the one hand, foreign opponents of Hitler joined German resistance groups or organizations, and on the other, joint bodies were formed to lead the struggle. In Munich, for example, representatives of the Anti-Nazi German People's Front and the Provisional Council of the Soviet organization Fraternal Cooperation of Prisoners of War (BSW), which also included Czech, Polish and French prisoners of war and had an extensive network of groups in southern Germany, formed an operational center in 1943.

In the concentration camps, the fighting community grew out of the joint efforts to secure the lives of prisoners from different nations, from the diverse actions of solidarity and the fight against the terror of the SS guards. In Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau, Mauthausen, Neuengamme, Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen, illegal international resistance organizations and camp committees were formed.

Another new form of anti-fascist struggle was the work of German communists and other anti-fascists in the prisoner-of-war camps in the Soviet Union. Immense efforts

were necessary to liberate German prisoners of war from Nazi ideology, isolate fascist elements among them, form anti-fascist activists, create an anti-fascist movement in the camps and train cadres who would take part in the fight against fascism and, after its destruction, in the building of a new democratic German state. The CPSU and the Soviet government, as well as leading organs of the Communist International, provided invaluable help in solving this complicated task.

Closely linked to this task was the activity of German anti-fascists on the [348] Soviet-German front. Trained in central anti-fascist and front schools, hundreds of anti-fascist German prisoners of war helped the political organs of the Red Army in their attempt to make the Wehrmacht members realize how pointless it was to continue the war. This was done by distributing leaflets and front newspapers in the German positions and by loudspeaker broadcasts from the front Soviet trenches. Members of the NKFD front organization went themselves individually or in groups into the fascist hinterland to show Wehrmacht soldiers the way out of the catastrophe and to convince them to take part in the fight against Hitler. On various occasions, it was possible to form anti-fascist groups of soldiers. In addition, members of the front organization carried out armed missions in the fascist hinterland.

During the course of the Second World War, a number of resistance organizations in Germany prepared for this form of armed struggle - in some cases together with organizations of prisoners of war and forced labourers. They procured weapons, ammunition and explosives and in some cases also carried out a certain amount of military training. Some of these organizations were broken up by the Gestapo. Armed actions were carried out in isolated cases, e.g. against members of the local repressive apparatus, in the arms industry and in the transport sector. In the last days of the war in particular, armed groups appeared in large numbers, driving out fascists, destroying military ammunition depots, communications facilities and prepared positions, disarming Volkssturm units and preventing planned destruction before the arrival of the forces of the anti-Hitler coalition. Armed uprisings also took place in some concentration camps, in which the prisoners liberated themselves from their tormentors. Several thousand German anti-fascists fought in the Red Army as well as in armed groups, partisan units and people's liberation armies in various European countries.⁸⁴

The variety of concrete forms of struggle that the KPD focused on, which could only be outlined here, clearly demonstrates the expertise and sound judgment of bourgeois historians who try to convince their readers that the documents of the KPD "did not contain any realistic recipes for concrete resistance work - i.e. actions to overthrow Hitler".⁸⁵ The instructions for practical resistance consisted precisely in the references to the various possibilities, to the diverse forms of struggle. Their application was dependent on the respective regional and local conditions - as there were no "recipes" and could not be any. It was up to the communists and other anti-fascists in the respective town or area to decide for themselves, in this specific case the district and, from the mid-1930s, the regional organizations of the KPD and their leaders, the party organizations or communist cells in towns, villages or factories and the non-communist anti-fascists working together with them in resistance groups, and later, after the start of the war, in larger resistance organizations, as well as the individual communists or active opponents of Hitler who sympathized with the KPD, who were often left to their own devices in smaller towns.

[349] Even under the complicated conditions of the war, when the connection between the Communists in the country and the party leadership abroad was extremely difficult to maintain and even broke down at times, the leading functionaries endeavored to maintain a

⁸⁴ See Willy Wolff, *An der Seite der Roten Armee. Zum Wirken des Nationalkomitees "Freies Deutschland" an der sowjetisch-deutschen Front 1943 bis 1945*, Berlin 1973; Heinz Kühnrich, *Der Partisanenkrieg in Europa 1939-1945*, Berlin 1968.

⁸⁵ Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft, vol. VI, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 1972, p. 977.

The aim was to correctly analyse the situation in Germany and to evaluate and generalize the experiences of the party and resistance organizations so that they could provide guidance for the anti-fascist struggle.

In the 1930s, before the start of the war, this guidance was provided through illegal press organs and leaflets, through consultations between members of the party leadership in the countries bordering Germany and functionaries from the country, and through the use of instructors and couriers. The Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the KPD, whose members were located in Paris, Prague and Moscow, were able to rely on the domestic and national leadership in Berlin for their guiding activities until 1935, and until 1939/40 on six section leaderships, which were based in Prague (since 1938 in Malmö and Gothenburg), Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris and Zurich and were each responsible for the direct guidance of district and regional leaderships and party organizations in certain parts of Germany.

After the start of the war, the party leadership led the resistance struggle of the communists and anti-fascists associated with them with the help of leaflets, radio broadcasts and representatives of the Central Committee, who entered Germany illegally via various channels. Until 1942, it was able to rely on the foreign leadership of the Central Committee in Stockholm, on operational lines that were active in Berlin with interruptions from 1940 to 1944, some of which maintained radio contact with the party leadership in Moscow, as well as on the lines of some organizations of emigrated German communists in Germany's neighbouring countries.⁸⁶

5. Strategic objective

In 1923, the German communists focused on the creation of a workers' government as the next strategic goal in the struggle against the big bourgeoisie and the fascist danger. The task of such a government, which did not yet mean the dictatorship of the proletariat, had to be to implement measures in the interests of the working people, based on the alliance of the working class and the middle classes - measures directed against big business and the fascist danger emanating from it. In the following years, the KPD began to use the dictatorship of the proletariat not only as propaganda but also as a slogan for action. As a result of overestimating the willingness of working people to fight for socialism, it formulated the strategic goal of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat in the struggle to prevent a fascist dictatorship.⁸⁷

[350] Ernst Thälmann's well-known statement at the illegal meeting of the Central Committee of the KPD on February 7, 1933, that there would probably be no other way of replacing the Hitler government than its revolutionary overthrow, provided a starting point for further considerations on how to define the next strategic goal in accordance with the given conditions. However, this did not mean that this overthrow and the proletarian revolution would necessarily be one and the same.⁸⁸ The chairman of the KPD described the removal of the Hitler-Hugenberg government as an "immediate task".

In connection with the discussions held in 1934/35 in the leading organs of the CI and in other communist parties about the strategy and tactics in the struggle against the fascist offensive, the leadership of the KPD also came to realize that it was necessary to find "transitional solutions" in accordance with the conditions, to determine the form of the approach to the socialist revolution and to prepare for a type of state after the elimination of fascism.

⁸⁶ Since questions of organization and guidance by the leadership of the KPD can only be outlined very briefly here for reasons of space, reference should be made to the following accounts: Margot Pikarski, *Zur Entwicklung des Parteiaufbaus und der Organisationsstruktur der KPD unter den Bedingungen des antifaschistischen Kampfes der KPD in den Jahren 1933 bis 1935*, phil. Diss., Berlin 1972, p. 23 ff.; Mammach, *Die deutsche antifaschistische Widerstandsbewegung*, p. 128 ff., p. 179 ff., p. 233 ff.; *Die Brüsseler Konferenz der KPD*, p. 13 ff., p. 29 ff.; Klaus Mammach/Gerhard Nitzsche, *Zum antifaschistischen Kampf der KPD in den Jahren von 1939 bis 1941*, in: *BzG*, 6/1971, p. 911 ff.; *Deutschland im zweiten Weltkrieg*, vol. 1, p. 275 ff., p. 577 ff.; vol. 2, p. 207 ff., p. 533 ff.

⁸⁷ See The Communist International. Kurzer historischer Abriß, Berlin 1970, p. 369 ff.

⁸⁸ See Ernst Thälmann, Geschichte und Politik. Articles and Speeches 1925 to 1933, Berlin 1973, p. 213 f.

regime, which was not yet the dictatorship of the proletariat, but had an anti-fascist, democratic character.

At the Brussels Conference held after the VII Congress of the CI in October 1935, the KPD declared the formation of a united front or popular front government as the next strategic goal after the fall of Hitler. It would be an "organ of cooperation between the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat and other anti-fascist parties in the interests of the entire working people",⁸⁹ a coalition of representatives of the working class and other toiling classes as well as the anti-Nazi bourgeoisie, who together would have brought about the overthrow of the fascist regime. This government, which would be neither an expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat nor a coalition government of the Weimar type, but over which the working class would have to exert decisive influence, would have to take decisive measures against fascism, against monopoly capital and big landownership, against reaction in general.

The conference concluded that the overthrow of fascism could not be brought about by the immediate struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, it also did not rule out the possibility that at a given moment - depending on the balance of power between the classes, the strength of the mass movement and the depth of the crisis of the monopolist system of rule - it would be possible to lead the working class and its allies directly to the conquest of political power. Regardless of how developments would initially unfold, the final liberation from exploitation and oppression was only possible through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the construction of socialism. The conference assumed that a unified revolutionary process of social transformation would take place, leading to socialism via an anti-fascist, anti-monopolistic democracy.

The KPD specified its strategic objectives in the "Guidelines for the Development of a Political Platform of the German People's Front" of June 1936. Based on the views of other, non-communist opponents of Hitler, it declared "that the new Reich will be a democratic republic in which the people decide freely on all [351] questions of the country's economy, domestic and foreign policy and the government is determined by a decision of the working people on the basis of universal, equal, secret and direct suffrage. The new empire will fulfill all the demands of the people for which the People's Front is fighting."⁹⁰ In this document, the leadership of the KPD set out its views on the policy of the new state in the areas of international relations, the democratic reorganization of state and social life, economic and social policy, education and armed protection. The claim that the KPD was now "committed to the bourgeois state and social order", that the KPD "propagated bourgeois-democratic forms, namely the National Assembly and coalition government, which had already once proved unsuitable for the emancipation of the working class", is fundamentally false.⁹¹ Precisely because this was the case, certain forms of bourgeois-parliamentary democracy had to be given a new content, this republic had to go beyond the boundaries of the bourgeois-parliamentary republic and, in the interests of social progress and the prevention of the resurgence of fascist reaction, distinguish itself from the Weimar state through its anti-fascist character, on the basis of which and within the framework of which fascism had been able to develop.

Based on the knowledge gained in the second half of the 1930s, the KPD reaffirmed at its Bern conference that its policy was "firmly and straightforwardly directed towards overthrowing Hitler in the closest cooperation with all peace- and freedom-loving Germans and replacing the Hitler dictatorship with a people's government freely elected by all the people in a new, democratic republic".⁹² This republic would be founded in alliance with the Soviet Union and all peace-loving peoples.

⁸⁹ Report by Wilhelm Pieck, in: The Brussels Conference of the KPD, p. 173.

⁹⁰ Wilhelm Pieck, *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften*, Vol. V, Berlin 1972, p. 365.

⁹¹ Ursula Langkau-Alex, *Volksfront für Deutschland*, vol. 1: Vorgeschichte und Gründung des "Ausschusses zur Vorbereitung einer deutschen Volksfront", 1933-1936, Frankfurt a. M. 1977, p. 164, p. 130.

⁹² The Bern Conference of the KPD, p. 129.

stand up for the safeguarding of peace in the spirit of international understanding. It would, "in contrast to the Weimar Republic, root out fascism, deprive it of its material basis through the expropriation of fascist trust capital and, again in contrast to the Weimar Republic, create reliable defenders of democratic freedoms and democratic people's rights in the army, the police and the civil service. In the new, democratic republic, in contrast to Weimar, the big bourgeoisie, covered by a coalition with a workers' party, will not be able to direct its economic and political attacks against the people, but the working class, united with the peasants, the middle class and the intelligentsia in the popular front, will determine the fate of the country."⁹³ The conference resolution goes on to say: "The policy of the Popular Front and the creation of a new democratic republic do not mean that the working class will renounce the struggle for socialism. In a People's Front Germany, the socialist and communist workers and their organizations will have full freedom to win the majority of the people for the socialist goal."⁹⁴

[352] Thus, by the end of the 1930s, the KPD had developed a strategy aimed at overthrowing Hitler's regime, preventing the war of conquest he was striving for and establishing an anti-fascist, democratic republic in which the working people would come to the conviction, based on their experiences, that the complete elimination of the power of monopoly capital and the transition to socialist revolution were necessary if what had been achieved up to that point was not to be jeopardized, but expanded and perfected in the interests of the majority of the people.

The KPD also adhered to this objective during the war. It supplemented it with the orientation to bring about the end of the fascist war of conquest through its own efforts, through the joint action of all opponents of Hitler, regardless of their class affiliation, political and ideological beliefs, that it was necessary to form a "truly German government", which should emerge from the "struggle for freedom of all classes of people", "stop the war immediately, return the German troops to the Reich's borders and initiate peace negotiations", "renouncing all conquered territories".⁹⁵ A free Germany that needed to be created meant: "A strong democratic state power that has nothing in common with the impotence of the Weimar regime, a democracy that ruthlessly nips in the bud any attempt to revive conspiracies against the people's rights to freedom or against the peace of Europe."⁹⁶

Leading functionaries of the illegal organizations of the KPD in Germany and the resistance organizations led by them held the same political positions. Efforts by bourgeois historians to construct a contradiction between the leadership abroad and the functionaries of the KPD in Germany remain a futile endeavor. This is proven, for example, by the material from the operational leadership of the party in Germany dated 1 May 1944 "We Communists and the National Committee 'Free Germany'"⁹⁷, which circulated in numerous party and resistance organizations. The members of this leadership also assumed a unified revolutionary process of social change, which was to be initiated with the elimination of the fascist regime. They were resolutely opposed to "skipping" the anti-fascist, democratic transformation, to "the proletarian dictatorship as a rallying cry in the first stage" after the fall of Hitler,⁹⁸ as some communists and local party organizations demanded out of revolutionary impatience. "It is important to clearly recognize the respective situation and to give the working class the programme of action that it understands today and for which it is prepared to fight."⁹⁹ The of the

⁹³ Ibid., p. 135.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 136.

⁹⁵ Quoted from *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 5, Berlin 1966, p. 576, Doc. 97.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ See Gertrud Glondajewski/Gerhard Roßmann, *Ein bedeutendes politisches Dokument des illegalen antifaschistischen Kampfes der KPD*, in: *BzG*, 4/1966, p. 652 ff.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 654.

⁹⁹ Ibid.; see also the document "Am Beginn der letzten Phase des Krieges", in: *BzG*, 3/1979, p. 402 ff.

The corresponding slogans were therefore: "Away with Hitler!", "End the war!", "For a free, independent, democratic Germany!".

The discussions about the next strategic goal also resulted in the definition of the tasks to be solved immediately after the liberation from fascism. They were addressed by functionaries of party and resistance organizations in Germany as well as imprisoned and emigrated communists who came to an agreement with other German anti-fascists. These included, for example, Anton Saefkov's "Political Testament" and the "Immediate Measures" he formulated, which were only recently discovered.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, the leadership of the KPD was busy working out detailed measures for the transition from war to peace, for the introduction of anti-fascist-democratic transformation in all areas of social life. The "Action Programme of the Bloc of Militant Democracy" of October 1944 bears witness to this, which, in addition to fundamental orientations such as the "establishment of a strong democratic people's regime", "breaking the omnipotence of fascist-imperialist monopoly capital", "expropriation of the great war criminals", contained an immediate programme that was to be implemented by the anti-fascists under the conditions of the military occupation of Germany.¹⁰¹ The "Guidelines for the work of the German anti-fascists in the German territory occupied by the Red Army"¹⁰², the "Immediate measures in the field of ideological education", the "Guidelines for the work of the local people's committees in the field of the economy", the "Advice for work in the countryside" and other guidelines that were drawn up in the first months of 1945 also bear witness to this.¹⁰³

These programs and guidelines were summarized in the appeal of June 11, 1945, in which the KPD formulated the "first and most urgent tasks for the reconstruction of Germany, for the rebirth of our people". It reaffirmed that the "establishment of an anti-fascist, democratic regime, a parliamentary-democratic republic with all democratic rights and freedoms for the people" was the next strategic goal.¹⁰⁴ "In this important document, the KPD drew on the lessons of history and focused on the creation of anti-imperialist-democratic conditions with the possibility of opening the way to socialism for the German people."¹⁰⁵

In Germany, the KPD was the only political force that recognized the danger posed by fascism at an early stage, correctly characterized its nature and goals and, step by step, developed a scientifically based strategy and tactics of anti-fascist struggle based on Marxism-Leninism, which began to implement this policy together with other, non-communist allies.

The anti-fascist attitude of the political forces that took part in the resistance movement against Hitler's regime varied and went to different lengths. These forces pursued various goals beyond the elimination of the Nazi regime, due to their different social positions and political views. Reformist and bourgeois groups of opponents of Hitler sought a return to the conditions before the fascist dictatorship. The communists, on the other hand, advocated consistent anti-fascism. For them, anti-fascist was also an anti-imperialist struggle. With its anti-fascist strategy and tactics, the KPD showed the German people the way out of the catastrophe conjured up by fascism and not to the status quo ante, but - going beyond it - to real peace.

¹⁰⁰ See Neues Deutschland, from July 22/23, 1978.

¹⁰¹ See Laschitzka, p. 261 ff.

¹⁰² See *ibid.*, p. 263 ff.; see also the same author, *Kämpferische Demokratie gegen Faschismus*, Berlin 1969.

¹⁰³ See Heinz Voßke, *Dokumente aus der programmatischen Tätigkeit der KPD für den Aufbau eines neuen, antifaschistisch-demokratischen Deutschlands* (February/March 1945), in: *BzG*, 3/1968, p. 472 ff.

¹⁰⁴ *Revolutionary German Party Programs. From the Communist Manifesto to the Program of Socialism*, ed. and ed. by Lothar Berthold and Ernst Diehl, Berlin 1967, p. 196.

¹⁰⁵ Erich Honecker, *On a safe course. On the 30th anniversary of the founding of the SED*, in: *Honecker, Reden und Aufsätze*, vol. 4, Berlin 1977, p. 293.

social changes, the only path that would make the return of any fascist danger, in whatever form, forever impossible by eliminating its causes, its economic and political roots.

[355]

Vera Wrona: Marxist-Leninist critique of fascism - an indispensable component of the anti-fascist-democratic upheaval

After 1945, the greatest revolutionary upheaval in German history took place on the territory of the GDR. The victory of the Soviet Union and its allies in the Second World War liberated the German people from the fascist dictatorship. This opened up before it the historic opportunity to eliminate fascism and its socio-economic foundations once and for all, to carry out an anti-imperialist-democratic upheaval and to pave the way for socialism. Under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party, the transition period from capitalism to socialism was initiated in one part of Germany. At the beginning of this period there was boundless material hardship caused by fascism and war, widespread hopelessness and deep mistrust of the new development among considerable sections of the population.

Political and spiritual apathy threatened people's lives no less than hunger and epidemics. Fascism had not only caused enormous material damage; it had also left behind an equally large spiritual wreckage in people's minds. It was therefore unspeakably difficult for the anti-fascists to overcome the ideological garbage, the spiritual chaos and the political and intellectual lethargy. Nevertheless, under the leadership of the Marxist-Leninists, they not only succeeded in clearing the rubble, getting the economy going and settling accounts with the war and Nazi criminals in a historically short space of time, but also in overcoming the prevailing fascist-imperialist ideology, its norms and values and developing anti-fascist, democratic and socialist ways of thinking and behaving.

In interaction with the many other measures for social transformation, above all for the economic and political disempowerment of the imperialists and Junkers, communists, class-conscious social democrats and bourgeois anti-fascists - supported by the Soviet occupying power - waged an energetic and self-sacrificing struggle for intellectual and cultural renewal, for the eradication of fascism. This meant, among other things, taking over the press and radio, completely reorganizing the publishing industry, freeing the visual arts, theater and literature from the influences of fascist and militaristic barbarism and bringing the ideas of peace and humanism to the fore in art and culture. This also meant renewing the universities and colleges in a far-reaching process of transformation.

The transformation of the education system made it particularly clear how immense the material and ideological problems were that had to be overcome in order to completely wrest all cultural institutions from the most reactionary forces and place them in the hands of the people. The newly formed democratic school administrations, to which Communists, Social Democrats and other anti-fascists belonged, not only had to make great efforts to refurbish buildings and classrooms - in many cases only in a makeshift manner -, sort out fascist teaching materials and provide new teaching materials, but they also had to replace the majority of the teaching staff. 70 to 80 percent of all teachers had been members of the Nazi Party and other fascist organizations. Only a small proportion could be replaced by anti-fascist teachers. With the help of the democratic parties, the trade unions, the youth and women's committees, the works councils and administrative bodies, tens of thousands of young workers, toiling farmers and employees were recruited as new teachers and, after a short preparation period, taken on as teachers. They had to acquire their teaching qualifications through practice and self-study. The majority of them proved their worth in the revolutionary reorganization of the education system.¹ It is without doubt one of the most impressive results of the post-war development of the GDR that it succeeded in destroying the imperialist German chauvinism, racial hatred and anti-communism, the master race and the spirit of subjugation so deeply detested by democratically-minded people all over the world, and in building a state whose highest ideological values - just like

¹ Class struggle, tradition, socialism. From the beginnings of the history of the German people to the shaping of the developed socialist society in the GDR. Grundriß, Berlin 1974, p. 510 ff.

peace and humanism, socialism and human dignity, friendship between peoples and proletarian internationalism. There are two main reasons for this result:

Firstly, it was of historical significance for the working class and all anti-fascist-democratic forces that the Soviet Union was one of the victorious powers. In the occupation zone it administered, the decisive organs of power of the fascist state, the army and the police, were smashed in accordance with the war aims of the anti-Hitler coalition. All fascist activity was prohibited, all fascist organizations and their branches were banned. In the spirit of proletarian internationalism, the Soviet Union provided the German anti-fascists with every assistance. It protected democratic development against fascist activities, imperialist interference and intervention. It ensured the strict implementation of the demilitarization, denazification and democratization measures laid down in the Potsdam Agreement and in the resolutions of the Allied Control Council.

Secondly, in contrast to the period after the First World War, the German working class in 1945 had a communist party with a fighting strength. Even before the complete destruction of Hitlerite fascism by the USSR and the other powers of the anti-Hitler coalition, the leadership of the KPD had not only directly led the anti-fascist resistance struggle at the front, in Germany and in emigration, but had also carried out long-term preparatory work and worked out a clear program for overcoming fascism and imperialism.

The KPD's conception was based on the realization, gained in decades of struggle against imperialism and fascism, that in the new epoch the final solution to social and national problems is only possible under socialism. At the same time, however, the leadership of the Communist Party recognized that under the given [357] conditions in Germany there were no real prerequisites for the immediate transition to socialism. These first had to be created in a consistent democratic and anti-imperialist struggle.

Therefore, in its historic appeal of June 11, 1945, the KPD aimed to unite all forces willing to rebuild under the leadership of the working class and to fight together against fascism, militarism and their economic foundations. The aim was to increase the organization and consciousness of the working class in the shortest possible time by creating a unity of action between communists, social democrats and non-party workers so that the working class could live up to its historical responsibility.

Although the American, British and French occupying powers evaded the obligations arising from the anti-Hitler coalition to eliminate German fascism and militarism, protected the old social structure in their zones of occupation and obstructed and suppressed democratic forces, they and their German accomplices were unable to prevent the working class in the Soviet zone of occupation from becoming aware of the historical challenge and facing up to it. Against the resistance of right-wing opportunist Social Democratic politicians who, following the imperialist Western powers, wanted to steer the emerging SPD in an anti-communist and anti-Soviet direction, it was possible in the Soviet occupation zone to forge the unity of the workers' movement on a revolutionary basis. In April 1946, the unification of the KPD and SPD created the unity of the labor movement on the basis of Marxism.

This created the decisive prerequisite for the working class to take advantage of the historic opportunity offered by the victory of the Soviet army over fascism and to take over the leadership of society without any resistance. At the same time, the political, organizational and ideological center for the cooperation of all anti-fascist-democratic forces was created. From here came the impetus for a lasting policy of alliance between the working class and the working farmers, the intelligentsia and the middle classes.

The development of working class unity on a revolutionary basis and the formation of close alliance relations between the working class and the other anti-fascist and fascist movements in

the country.

The reunification of peace-loving forces took place in the course of a fierce practical-political and ideological struggle against the defeated but not destroyed fascist-imperialist reaction and for the transformation of social conditions. Fascist ideology continued to have an effect and, against the background of the general cultural decline that had occurred over the past twelve years, formed a receptive ground for new forms of imperialist ideology. The anti-fascist-democratic transformation of social conditions therefore had to be combined with a comprehensive and consistent confrontation with fascism, its nature and its sources as well as its ideology. This confrontation became a condition for the implementation of social progress, in which the Marxist-Leninist analysis and critique of fascism had to prove itself. [358]

1. Defining the nature of fascism

In the KPD's appeal of June 11, 1945, the path and goal of the struggle of the working people after the destruction of fascism were clearly conceived. One of the most important prerequisites for democratic reconstruction was the clarification of the nature of fascism and the necessity of its complete destruction - including fascist ideology.

Fascist ideology had clouded the thinking of large sections of the people with the pseudo-scientific heresies of racism, geopolitics and its mythical-mystical view of history and the world, as well as with militant chauvinism, anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. Fascist ideology had activated all reactionary and anti-human ideas from history. Combined with a social demagoguery that was difficult for the masses to understand, the imperialist class goals were suggested as a "national mission".

Even though the imperialist bourgeoisie in Germany had lost important material means of ideological mass influence - such as radio, press, publishing, etc. - after the defeat of fascism and the Nazi ideology had by and large already lost its dominant position, the filth of fascist ideology had not yet been cleared from people's minds. In addition, the imperialist forces, militarily and politically defeated but still far from economically disempowered, were anxious to prevent a serious confrontation with fascism and its ideology.

The German monopolist bourgeoisie and its ideologues benefited from the fact that decades of imperialist and fascist ideological influence had left deep scars. Many were under the spell of the mood created by the fascists that the fall of the Nazi empire was tantamount to the fall of Germany. Under the influence of fascist-imperialist ideology, dissatisfaction with the consequences of the war spread, preventing many people from acknowledging their own co-responsibility and complicity in the catastrophe. Rubble, hunger, hardship and epidemics or the resettlement from former German territories, for example, were not seen as the result of the world war unleashed by German fascism and the atrocious crimes committed by it, but as the "retribution of the victors". This was exploited by German reaction and the imperialist occupying powers to perpetuate the anti-Sovietism, anti-communism and revanchism of fascist ideology in particular, and thus to erect new ideological obstacles to the ideological re-education of the German people in the spirit of democracy, peace and friendship between nations.

Particularly deeply rooted in the consciousness of the masses was anti-communism, which had largely dominated bourgeois ideology since the emergence of scientific communism and had reached its highest peak under fascism. It particularly clouded the view for the perspective, reversed the friend-foe relationship, created a feeling of fear and uncertainty about the coming development, spread lethargy and thus inhibited the initiative vital for the realization of the anti-fascist-democratic upheaval.

With the slogans "freedom against dictatorship" and "democracy against totalitarianism", the ideologues of the militant anti-communist front that formed immediately after the defeat of fascism attempted to exploit the masses' revulsion against the fascist dictatorship they had just overcome and steer them in an anti-Soviet, anti-communist direction. By equating the political and intellectual principles of fascism with those of scientific socialism and the rule of fascism with the reality of the socialist social order, both the Soviet Union and the Marxist-Leninist party in Germany were to be discredited in the eyes of the masses.

In this context, the confrontation with fascism, a broad and effective ideological education of the masses about the connection between imperialism and fascism, about its inhumanity and about the unscientific nature of its theories and ideas, was also one of the most urgent tasks in pushing back the newly forming imperialist forces and their post-war ideology.

How effective the ideological education about the nature of fascism was in all classes and strata depended to a large extent on the agreement of views in the two working parties, the KPD and the SPD. Therefore, the question of the ideological confrontation with fascism was of particular importance in the process of preparing the unification of the two parties.

The realization that fascism was the main political, social and ideological enemy of the working class and the entire working people was the starting point of the ideological and ideological struggle of the communists and social democrats after the defeat of fascism. The KPD's appeal of June 11, 1945 demanded: "Systematic education about the barbaric character of the Nazi race theory, about the hypocrisy of the 'doctrine of Lebensraum', about the catastrophic consequences of Hitler's policies for the German people."² This orientation also corresponded to the historical experiences and the will of the class-conscious Social Democrats. Otto Grotewohl, the chairman of the central committee of the SPD, declared at the 1st functionaries' conference in Greater Berlin: "We must not tire of placing the description of the naked horrors of Nazism at the beginning of our political educational work. We must tear the mask off its face again and again so that the German people will forever be filled with an immense and unforgettable disgust and loathing for the National Socialist scum."³

However, this agreement in the definition of the main enemy could not conceal the fact that there were significant differences between the two workers' parties in their understanding of the nature of fascism. The KPD based its assessment of fascism on the findings of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, which had defined fascism in power as "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist, most imperialist elements of finance capital"⁴. Based on this, it placed the necessity of destroying its socio-economic foundations at the forefront of its reckoning with fascism. For this reason, the KPD's appeal of June 11, 1945 made a clear demand for the "expropriation of all the assets of the Nazi bigwigs and war criminals, and the transfer of these assets into the hands of the people"⁵.

In its assessment of fascism, the SPD Central Committee was close to the views of the leadership of the KPD. This was reflected in the SPD's appeal of June 15, 1945, above all in the anti-imperialist problems and goals as well as in the suggestion of the connection between fascism and imperialism. However, the appeal also contained demands such as the

² Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, (hereafter: Documents and Materials), Series III, Vol. 1, Berlin 1959, p. 19.

³ Ibid., p. 36.

⁴ The VII Congress of the Communist International, Berlin 1975, p. 93.

⁵ Documents and materials, p. 19.

elimination of the "Nazi over-organization of the economy"⁶, which were not clearly aimed at the economic disempowerment of German imperialism.

In broad circles of the SPD, the assessment of fascism as a phenomenon of the "rebellious petty bourgeoisie" or as a state power that stood above "the proletariat and the bourgeoisie" - assessments that had been very widespread in social democracy since the 1920s. After 1945, many Social Democratic comrades saw Nazism as a pure "policy of robbery and violence" or "evil par excellence, which continues to abuse power with the means of violence, scorning all good, all humanity", as described, for example, at the conference of Social Democratic intellectual workers on the occasion of the opening of the Social Democratic state party school at Bieberstein Castle in November 1945.⁷

In the first weeks and months after the liberation, the class-conscious forces within the Social Democrats were still insufficiently successful in applying historical-materialist social analysis to the critique of fascism. Even those Social Democratic functionaries who struggled for a consistent Marxist standpoint and represented the proletarian class line within the SPD still found it difficult to reveal the deeper social causes of the fascist catastrophic policies. The focus was on the moral condemnation of fascism. This was also evident in Otto Grotewohl's speech to the SPD's 1st functionaries' conference in June 1945, when he stated: "There has never been a ruler in history who, like Hitler, would have chased the apocalyptic horsemen of misery, war, hunger and death over his own people with cynical openness to the last breath. There is no baseness and no crime that these fanatics of violence would not have committed or been prepared to commit."⁸

Of course, the moral condemnation of fascism and its atrocities was of great importance for the ideological re-education of the German people. It helped to make clear the shared responsibility of the individual and to expose the misanthropy of fascism. It drew on the experiences of the masses and could form an important link to the scientific recognition of the connections between fascism and imperialism. The KPD's appeal also morally condemned the Nazi regime. But this moral evaluation was only one side. It was supplemented or based on the recognition of the laws in the development of imperialism, its tendency towards an openly dictatorial form of rule.

Therefore, starting from the moral condemnation of fascism, the inner relationship between imperialism and fascism had to be uncovered and made transparent for the working people. For clarifying the connections between fascism and imperialism was not simply a theoretical problem. It was above all [361] significant for the solution of action tasks that could not be postponed. In many cases, a lack of understanding of this connection was the reason for the opinion that capitalism in Germany had already been eliminated with the military defeat of the Hitler regime, the extensive abolition of the fascist ruling apparatus and the destruction of the economy. Such a view, which contradicted social reality, hindered the struggle to eliminate the socio-economic roots of fascism. For if capitalism had actually been destroyed, neither the democratic land reform nor the economic disempowerment of the Nazi activists and war criminals would have been necessary.

However, the actual conditions after the destruction of the fascist state urgently required precisely these measures if the opportunity for a peaceful and democratic development was not to remain unused. In the joint ideological struggle of the Marxist forces of both workers' parties, it was therefore particularly important to bring the emotional rejection of fascism's anti-humanism, which had grown out of direct experience, up to the level of scientific insight into the economic and political nature of the fascist dictatorship.

⁶ Ibid., p. 30.

⁸ Documents and materials, p. 36.

⁷ Volksstimme, from 21.11.1945, p. 2.

⁸ Documents and materials, p. 36.

so that the working class - ahead of all other democratic forces - could wage a clear and consistent struggle against fascism and imperialism.

At a party conference of the KPD in Leipzig in October 1945, the task was clearly outlined by Walter Ulbricht: "Today it is no longer enough to say that Hitler was a criminal, Hitler was a bandit, etc., but it is necessary to deepen the ideological work, not only to expose Hitler, but to show the essence of German imperialism ... This means that both parties have the task of explaining the theory of the essence of imperialism - as developed by Lenin - above all to the working class."⁹

In the struggle between the two workers' parties to clarify the nature of fascism, a series of publications of great ideological significance appeared in which the Marxist standpoint of the communists was controversially defended.¹⁰ They made it clear, above all on the basis of economic analysis and many facts, that fascism has its socio-economic roots in imperialism.

Grotewohl's important speech at the SPD functionaries' conference on September 14, 1945 showed that the ideological clarification process within the Social Democratic Party of Germany was progressing rapidly. In his keynote speech, Grotewohl set himself the task of arriving at a "class-political interpretation" of the events from 1918 to 1945. "The class-political significance of the drama of 1933," he said, "consisted in the elimination of democracy as the precondition for the existence and rule of an organized working class and in the establishment of a dictatorship of the high-capitalist bourgeoisie and the large landowners in the forms of Hitler's Caesarism and so-called German Socialism; both were only masks of high-capitalist dictatorship methods."¹¹

[362] This realization was of great political and ideological significance for the further united struggle of the working class. In the ranks of the SPD, it led to the conclusion that it was necessary to economically disempower German imperialism in order to secure anti-fascist-democratic development. With this in mind, Grotewohl continued in the above-mentioned speech: "If the land reform removed one root of fascism, the purification of the factories from fascist management removed the second."¹²

These findings, which clearly demonstrated the process of returning to Marxism and turning to Leninism, were reflected in the economic policy guidelines of the SPD and especially in the guidelines of the Central Committee "On Combating Monopolies and Corporations" of January 1946, which stated that Marxism and Karl Marx's predictions about the concentration process of capital and the development towards monopoly capitalism had been confirmed. "Without the support of the cartels and trusts, National Socialism would never have gained control over the German people, Hitler would never have been able to overrun the whole of Europe with war."¹³ An editorial in the central organ of the SPD on these guidelines noted that German imperialism was solely to blame for the Second World War and mainly to blame for the First World War.¹⁴

In the course of the joint anti-fascist action, ideological and theoretical agreement on the nature of Hitler fascism grew out of the political agreement on the characterization of the main opponent of the German working class and the German people,

⁹ Walter Ulbricht, Die nächsten Aufgaben der KPD, in: Ulbricht, Zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, Vol. II, Zusatzbd., Berlin 1966, p. 279.

¹⁰ See Walter Ulbricht, Die Legende vom deutschen Sozialismus. Ein Lehrbuch für das schaffende Volk über das Wesen des deutschen Faschismus, Berlin 1945; the same, Thesen über den Hitlerfaschismus, in: Einheit, 1/1946; Wilhelm Girnus, Wer macht Geschichte?, Berlin/Leipzig 1946.

¹¹ Otto Grotewohl, Where do we stand, where are we going? The Path and Goal of German Social Democracy, in: Grotewohl, Im Kampf um Deutschland. Reden und Aufsätze, vol. 1, Berlin 1948, p. 18 f.

¹² Ibid., p. 37.

¹³ IML/ZPA, NL 90/10, vol. 1.

¹⁴ The People, from January 17, 1946.

from which decisive conclusions were drawn for the social content of the anti-fascist-democratic transformation. Thus, at the first conference of the sixties, which took place in December 1945 in preparation for the unification of the two parties, the SPD and KPD were able to state unanimously: "The danger has not yet been averted that reaction and fascism will sooner or later raise their heads again ... Above all, however, it must not be forgotten for a moment that Hitlerite fascism was nothing other than the tool of monopoly capital to crush all progressive and liberal forces, to carry out the criminal war and conquest plans of finance capital. In the power of the trusts, corporations and cartels lies the deepest root of fascism and imperialist war. This is the main force of reaction, and as long as this power is not broken, the danger of a reactionary restoration is not averted, peace and the new democratic order are not finally secured. Monopoly capital has not yet been destroyed; it still has numerous helpers and allies."¹⁵

This Marxist analysis of the connection between imperialism and fascism was of great importance for the practical process of social upheaval. At the same time, it helped to lead the debate against the purely intellectual-historical, irrationalist-mystical interpretation of recent German history by bourgeois historiography. A number of bourgeois historians, philosophers, sociologists and others, especially in West Germany, attempted to link the confrontation with fascism with a conception of saving the ecological and political power of imperialism. It mystified the socio-economic basis of fascism and derived the fascist dictatorship from "demonic" activities or even from Hitler's "demonic personality". In his book "Abschied von der bis- herigen Geschichte", Alfred Weber, for example, attempted to prove that the establishment of the fascist dictatorship had been caused by the emphasis on dark demonic powers:

"Something indefinably objective broke out, which, like a general wave of the soul, washed away what had previously been taken for granted and unshakably acquired. A collective, supra-personal power that had been concealed and chained suddenly broke out of its prison." Weber used the "flapping of the wings of dark demonic powers" to explain fascism.¹⁶

The mythologization of the historical significance of personalities thus became a mythologization of history. Consequently, historical continuity was denied on the basis of social and economic development. The National Socialist ideology of the greatness of the "Führer" and the missionary character of the "Third Reich" were thus given a negative twist. In this way, National Socialism was often only defined as "Hitlerism".

Other ideologues endeavored, apologetically and aggressively at the same time, to shift the blame for fascist rule onto the revolutionary workers' movement, onto the Marxist party.¹⁷ The connection between the intellectual-political attitude and economic development of German monopoly capital, which gave German fascism its characteristic character, remained untouched in these portrayals. It was precisely by ignoring or deliberately denying this connection that the essence and character of German imperialism and militarism and the socio-political function of fascism were to be obscured.

In order to make a Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the history of our people, to lead the struggle against the falsification and misuse of the progressive national heritage and thus to develop a new historical consciousness of the working people, the theoretical essence of which is

¹⁵ Resolutions of the conference of the Central Committee of the SPD and the Central Committee of the KPD with the district representatives of the two parties on December 20 and 21, 1945 in Berlin, in: Dokumente und Materialien, p. 349.

¹⁶ Alfred Weber, Abschied von der bisherigen Geschichte, Hamburg 1946, p. 226 f. - Friedrich Meinecke, Gerhard Ritter and Siegfried Kahlert also unanimously declared in 1945/46 that German history was dark, mysterious and unrecognizable for them (see Friedrich Meinecke, Die deutsche Katastrophe. Betrachtungen und Erinnerungen, Wiesbaden 1946; Gerhard Ritter, Geschichte als Bildungsmacht. Ein Beitrag zur historisch-politischen Neubestimmung, Stuttgart 1946). These attempts at interpretation, which explain the transfer of power to the fascists and the nature of the

National Socialist system of rule through a pathology of the fascist leaders, continue to the present day.

¹⁷ Konrad Adenauer, Friedrich Meinecke, Walter Höpke, Karl Jaspers, H. Windig and E. Kordt deserve special mention here.

In order to achieve this goal, which consisted in recognizing the objectivity of the historical process and the role of the masses as a decisive force in shaping history, the nature of fascism had to be clearly defined, the Nazi historical lies had to be smashed and a scientific view of history based on historical materialism had to be developed and communicated. Such a view of history was of great importance both for the elaboration of scientific policy and for the understanding of this policy by the masses. [364]

2. On the confrontation with fascist ideology

The exposure of the essence of fascism by the Marxist-Leninists was of decisive importance for the successful fight against fascist ideology. This had the function of justifying the fascist reign of terror at home and the aggressive intentions of German fascism towards neighboring countries. Through the systematic contamination of large sections of the German people with such anti-scientific and anti-humanist doctrines as the race and Lebensraum theories, the people's resistance to the fascist regime was paralyzed and considerable sections of the population were made ready to participate in the crimes of the fascists. With the myth of the alleged superiority of the "Aryan race", attempts were made to stifle the class consciousness of the German working class, to falsify the social question into a "racial question" and to justify the inconceivable crimes against other peoples, above all against members of the Polish and Soviet peoples and against Jewish people. The Lebensraum theory, which had the thesis of the German people as a "people without space" as its main content, provided the "theoretical" basis for German fascism's policy of plunder and conquest.

Both theories, long since scientifically disproved and practically proven untenable by the development of various peoples, nations and states in all parts of the world, remained - like fascist ideology as a whole - with superficial phenomena of social life, mystifying them and aiming for emotional impact. They replaced reason and knowledge with blind faith and racial supremacism.

There was therefore an urgent need to completely eliminate these misconceptions from people's minds, especially as the difficult and complicated post-war conditions could prove to be a breeding ground for their continued existence. For example, theories of living space formed a serious obstacle to creating understanding for the resettlement of Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia and for the recognition of the Oder/Neisse border. It was therefore important to expose the misanthropy and misanthropy of fascist ideology, to uncover its manipulative function in the mechanism of domination and at the same time to expose the theoretical-philosophical sources of, for example, the fascist theory of race and living space.

A working commission of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) had done essential preparatory work for this and had already adopted a concept for the fight against fascist heresies at the beginning of 1945. This concept was based on the following theoretical and ideological findings:

1. The fascist racial heresies and the habitat theory have a pseudo-scientific character and are ideologically directed above all against Marxism and humanism.
2. The myth of race and habitat serves fascism as a chauvinistic-nationalist incitement of the masses and to train them as blind tools for the implementation of the fascist policy of conquest.
3. Fascist heresies are not false scientific hypotheses and therefore cannot be refuted solely with scientific arguments. It is necessary to expose them as deliberate political-ideological manipulation.
4. The struggle of all militant anti-fascists against these heresies should be waged according to the following points of view [365]

- by proving their contradiction to the results of the natural and social sciences;
 - by exposing their deliberate lying character;
 - by proving its catastrophic consequences for the peoples of the world and the German people;
 - by uncovering the historical roots of the fascist racial and living space ideology, which was part of the bourgeois crisis consciousness at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.
- 20th century are to be included in the critique.¹⁸

This preparatory work was reflected in the practical ideological activities of the Marxist-Leninist party in the first years after liberation. Extensive ideological educational work was carried out in a large number of brochures, newspaper and magazine articles, in the training material of the two workers' parties - after their unification in the publications of the SED.¹⁹ From the summer of 1945, for example, the KPD held weekly training evenings. These were supported by consultations in the party press. The training program served to explain the KPD's appeal and action program, unmasked the fascist fallacies and helped party members to take an offensive in their confrontation with fascism and imperialism, with fascist and imperialist ideology.

The central committee of the SPD also organized the fight against fascist ideology for the spiritual renewal of the German people. Under the theme "Twelve years of Nazi rule and its consequences", seven problem areas were dealt with in lectures and seminars, which were intended to enable the members of the party to solve the upcoming problems in the field of ideology and culture in an anti-fascist and democratic sense.²⁰

Marxist publications on fascist ideology also proved that racial misconceptions and the myth of Lebensraum were not new inventions by the "theorists" of the Nazi movement, but that they were closely linked to those reactionary ideological concepts that were intended to justify or conceal capitalist relations of exploitation and oppression and imperialist expansion with biologicistic, anthropological and geographical "justifications". Above all, the racial theories of Joseph Arthur de Gobineau and Houston Stuart Chamberlain, which were created during the period of the expansion of the capitalist system and its development into imperialism in order to "justify" the policies of the colonial powers towards the peoples they conquered and oppressed, also served to justify the terror of the German imperialist forces against the colonial peoples. During the fascist era, they were put into practice in the concentration camps, in the pogroms against the Jews and in the Nazis' mass extermination campaigns against other peoples. The fascist heresies were not only directed against the population of colonial countries, but also served the purpose of warlike expansion, the oppression and extermination of the population of developed capitalist states. In particular, however, they had an anti-communist thrust. Above all, they served to justify the monstrous crimes committed against the peoples of the Soviet Union.

The Marxist-Leninists therefore exposed the theories of race and Lebensraum as an ideological expression of German imperialism's chauvinist quest for world domination. Based on Marxist-Leninist insights into the relationship between race and society and

¹⁸ IML/ZPA, KI 36; see also Sonja Eichhofer, Probleme des gemeinsamen politisch-ideologischen und weltanschaulich-theoretischen Kampfes von KPD und SPD gegen die faschistische Ideologie und um die Grundlagen der antifaschistisch-demokratischen Revolution im Prozeß der Herausbildung und Stabilisierung der Aktionseinheit der beiden Arbeiterparteien, phil. Diss., Berlin 1971.

¹⁹ The most notable examples are Ulbricht, Die Legende vom deutschen Sozialismus; Girnus; Bela Fogarasi, Zerstörung der Kultur in Deutschland unter der Herrschaft des Faschismus, Berlin 1945; Georg Lukács, Der Rassenwahnsinn - ein Feind des menschlichen Fortschritts, in: Aufbau, 2/1945; J. Shdanow, Der imperialistische Charakter der deutschen Rassenlehre, in: Neue Welt, 3/1946; Siegbert Kahn, Antisemitismus und Rassenhetze, Berlin 1948; Stephan Heymann, Marxismus und Rassenfrage, Berlin 1948; Georg Rehberg, Hitler und die NSDAP in Wort und Tat, Berlin 1946.

²⁰ Eichhofer, p. 153 ff.

They refuted the fascist doctrine of the superiority and inferiority of different races based on the findings of natural science. They showed that the fascist racial doctrines were also untenable from a scientific-biological point of view.

In an extensive article, Georg Lukács made it clear that the fascist ideologues were ultimately not concerned with scientific statements about the nature and significance of the races, but with the justification of a view of history with which to justify imperialist actions and goals that were hostile to humanity in an ostensibly scientific manner.²¹ Based on the definition of fascism given by the Communist International at its VII World Congress in 1935, Lukács came to the conclusion that fascist ideology was subordinated to the goals of the most reactionary circles of the German imperialists, in particular their striving for unlimited world domination. Of course, these goals were not openly formulated and were therefore not or only insufficiently understood by the majority of the people. Lukács showed how the fascists had demagogically transformed the German people's longing for national and social rebirth into their doctrine of the claim to world domination. The Fascist ideology's hostility to progress found expression in the principle of the inequality of people and nations.

In his essay "Who makes history?", Wilhelm Girnus dealt in detail with the fascist theory of race and living space. He contrasted the fascist heresies with the scientific findings of the materialist view of history. He showed the close relationship between the fascist view of history and the theories of Oswald Spengler, whose common trait is the negation of regularity in the historical process. In an argument with the leading fascist ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, who declared that the life of a race, of a people, was the formation of a mystical synthesis, an activity of the soul that could neither be explained by reason nor made comprehensible by the representation of cause and effect²², Girnus wrote that this meant "that Nazism denies history as a science. And not only denies it, but destroys it, because the essence of science consists in researching and recognizing the cause of the emergence and change of the phenomena of reality."²³

[367] Girnus exposed the logical inconsistency of the fascist view of history, according to which supposedly unchanging races are the cause of constantly occurring changes in history. He examined the fascist characterization of races and their characteristics and contrasted them with the views of humanist scientists who, as the example of Alexander von Humboldt shows, professed the unity of the human race. It is not races that shape history, he explained, but nature and history that shape races. Based on the view of historical materialism that the mode of production of a society is decisive for the character and development of society and that the other conditions of social life - including the biological ones - are subordinate to this determining factor, Girnus came to the conclusion: "The influence of the biological factors (race) on the historical factors is a variable that can be neglected in comparison with the social factors ... With increasing civilization, the influence of biological factors on historical changes becomes less and less."²⁴

While reactionary bourgeois ideology dismissed racial antisemitism after the defeat of fascism as an intellectual aberration of a few psychopaths instead of vigorously combating it and declared that it was already dead and without any influence, the Marxists consistently dealt with this barbaric manifestation of fascist ideology. Siegbert Kahn analyzed the emergence and development of anti-Semitism in Germany.²⁵ He revealed its class character and its social function in ideological manipulation. Stephan

²¹ See note 19.

²² Quoted from Girnus, p. 9.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 15 f.

²⁵ See note 19.

Heymann exposed racial theory and anti-Semitism as an ideological expression of German imperialism's striving for world domination and as an element for fomenting war psychosis among the German people.²⁶

These and a series of other popularly written works and essays, as well as the brochures on fascist ideology published by the SED party leadership for party training in the "Socialist Education Booklets" series, were particularly popular among the working class, youth and intelligentsia. Here a valid answer was given to the questions about the causes and nature of fascist theories.

Since the authors did not stop at the negation of fascist views, but showed how Marxist-Leninist ideology develops its arguments in accordance with the real processes in society and the results of science, the confrontation with fascist heresies not only helped to recognize their incorrectness and misanthropy, but also introduced the members of the SED, large sections of the working class and the youth to the study of Marxism-Leninism.

If the German people were to be put in a position to recognize the situation after the defeat of Hitler's fascism, to assess their complicity and co-responsibility, to overcome fatalistic attitudes to history and to draw the right conclusions from the lessons of German history, the greatest attention had to be paid to conveying a scientific view of history in the confrontation with fascist ideology.

[368]The KPD was not unprepared for these requirements either. As early as 1944/45, a working group of the Central Committee of the KPD had held numerous consultations on the ideological, methodological and content-related problems of a scholarly account of German history and set down the results in guidelines.²⁷ On this basis, a commission of eleven people - Marxists and other anti-fascists - from the National Committee for a Free Germany began to draw up "Guidelines for the teaching of German history" in spring 1945, which were completed in July 1945.

The following ideological and methodological demands were made for the scientific presentation of German history: unconditional scientificity in the presentation of history; recognition of the workings of objective laws; consideration of the primacy of socio-economic factors and the role of the masses in the historical process. According to the preamble of the guidelines, the criterion for evaluating historical movements and events as well as the work of historical personalities had to be social progress in its development. At the same time, it was demanded that all nationalistic, racist and militaristic elements be eradicated from the historical picture. The aim of history lessons was declared to be education for democratic thinking and responsible action, for a genuine national consciousness free of national narrow-mindedness and racist arrogance.²⁸

The publication of the most important works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism and the popular presentation of the lives of the best representatives of the materialist view of history such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, V. I. Lenin, Franz Mehring, G. V. Plekhanov and others by the two workers' parties - and after unification by the SED - formed an important basis for these demands to be implemented to a significant extent. The German working class received a great deal of help in this - as in all other areas - from the Soviet Union.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ See IML/ZPA, KI 36/412-A, sheets 8-10.

²⁸ See Erich Weinert, *Das Nationalkomitee "Freies Deutschland"*, Berlin 1957, p. 100 f.; Eberhard Hüttner, *Die schöpferische Leistung der KPD und SED bei der Entwicklung einer festen Zusammenarbeit von Marxisten und Christen im Kampf gegen den Hitlerfaschismus und beim Aufbau der antifaschistischen demokratischen Ordnung (unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der gemeinsame Lösung einiger Grundprobleme der geistigen Umwälzung 1945/1949)*, phil. Diss., Berlin 1966, p. 153 ff.

The first works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and other Marxist-Leninist authors published after 1945 were printed by the Soviet military administration or produced in German-language publishing houses in the Soviet Union. They formed an important basis, especially for the formation of Marxist forces in the offensive confrontation with fascist and imperialist ideology.

Above all, it was important to analyze those historical events and to draw the lessons from them that were of decisive importance for solving the tasks of the anti-fascist-democratic revolution. For this reason, the lessons of the November Revolution, the role of reactionary Prussianism in German history, the nature of German imperialism, the nature and causes of the emergence of Hitler fascism and the character of the Second World War were dealt with primarily in speeches by leading members of the workers' parties, in press articles, in monographs and also in party training.

[369]Of great importance for the development of a scientific view of history and historical consciousness was a series of monographic works such as: Alexander Abusch, *Irrweg einer Nation*; Wilhelm Girus, *Wer macht Geschichte?*; Albert Norden, *Lehren deutscher Geschichte*; Walter Ulbricht, *Die Legende vom deutschen Sozialismus*.

The "Guidelines for the Teaching of German History" were primarily aimed at educating a new, anti-fascist generation of teachers and contributed in many ways to the democratic transformation of cultural and intellectual life. They created a firm foundation for the cooperation of all anti-fascist-democratic forces and enabled the progressive sections of the people to recognize those responsible for the misfortune of two national catastrophes and to actively participate in the economic and intellectual disempowerment of German imperialism. Above all, the democratic school reform, as the first conclusion from the realization of the necessity to powerfully clear away the intellectual debris and reactionary traditions, became a real milestone on the path to the development and consolidation of the anti-fascist-democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class.

The fact that German fascism was essentially based on reactionary Prussianism, its militarism, its power politics, its political conservatism and bureaucratism, made it necessary to mobilize the spirit of democracy and humanism against the militaristic spirit of Potsdam in all areas of social life in the confrontation with fascist ideology. This became all the more urgent when, after the defeat of fascism, attempts to oppose Prussianism and Hitler's fascism, or even to present them as irreconcilable, became apparent in bourgeois historiography.

The KPD therefore devoted great attention to presenting the role of reactionary Prussianism in German history. Building on the work of Marx, Engels and Mehring on German history, great attention was paid to criticizing reactionary Prussianism in Marxist literature and the press, as well as in party training. Without overlooking the specifics of barbaric fascism, the intellectual continuity between this and Prussian militarist development was worked out. This was also important for awakening the understanding and activity of the masses for the political and economic disempowerment and reckoning with the Junkertum as a main pillar of fascism. This confrontation with Prussian militarism was continued after the unification of the two workers' parties.²⁹

The reactionary traditions of German history were also the subject of various speeches and writings by the best representatives of German cultural and intellectual life. Johannes R. Becher, for example

²⁹ Alexander Abusch, *Irrweg einer Nation*, Berlin 1946 - However, in some publications from this period - and this is particularly true of Abusch's book - in an effort to expose the roots of fascism in German history, this history was presented as an uninterrupted series of victories of the darkest reaction, in which there was hardly any room left for the great revolutionary traditions of the German people. This conception of German history as a single continuing misery was corrected in the following years.

dealt convincingly with recent German history and its causes in his "German Confession". Above all, he warned against settling for verbal anti-fascism while leaving everything else as it was. "Destroying Nazism means at the same time shaking its [370] reactionary foundation and removing it layer by layer, so that political criminality and adventurism in Germany will lack any possibility of growing up again on its soil in this or that variant in the future."³⁰

Soon after the defeat of fascism, the imperialist Western powers and the German imperialist bourgeoisie attempted to regain the lost political and ideological influence in East Germany. The reactionary ideologues endeavored to reshape the chauvinistic anti-communism of fascist ideology for their own purposes. This was served by the development and dissemination of the so-called concept of totalitarianism, the main content of which was the open identification of communism with Hitler fascism and of the Marxist-Leninist world view with fascist ideology. In a series of publications, the totalitarianism of Hitler fascism and socialist democracy, the Nazis' de- magogical "people's community principle" and the Marxist view of the relationship between the individual and society, the brown regime's disregard for the spirit and ethical values and the materialism of Marxism were presented as essentially the same views.³¹

In reality, this reorientation and adaptation of bourgeois ideology after the defeat of fascism was aimed at continuing the intellectual traditions of imperialism and transforming them into an imperialist ideology in line with the changed conditions of class struggle, which had helped to prepare fascist ideology in Germany. For example, the political and philosophical ideas of Oswald Spengler, Georges Sorel and Friedrich Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger and the geopolitical teachings of Karl Haushofer and Friedrich Ratzel were revived and used directly against the Marxist world view and the democratic reconstruction in East Germany. The confrontation with the intellectual sources of fascist ideology therefore became an increasingly urgent task in the consistent continuation of the anti-fascist-democratic upheaval.

Based on this insight into the conditions of the ideological struggle, the SED focused on an intensified and consistent examination of the intellectual sources of fascist ideology. Especially after the Second Party Congress of the SED (1947), the historical connections between anti-communism and fascist ideology were uncovered in a series of important writings and it was shown how racism, geopolitics and the fascist ideology of history were inevitably reactivated by the anti-communist agitation.³²

[371] Otto Grotewohl gave a comprehensive answer to the current problems of the ideological struggle at that time in his lecture "The Spiritual Situation of the Present and Marxism" at the 1st Cultural Day of the SED in May 1948. In a theoretical-historical review of the precursors of fascist ideology, he analyzed the development of the reactionary currents of imperialist philosophy and worldview associated with the disastrous policies of the German big bourgeoisie since the turn of the century. He came to the conclusion "that the

³⁰ Johannes R. Becher, *German Confession*, Berlin n.d., p. 35.

³¹ See Ossip Flechtheim, *Dokumente zur parteipolitischen Entwicklung in Deutschland seit 1945*, Vol. II, Berlin 1963, p. 50; see also Christoph Engel, *Der Kollektivmensch*, Limburg 1949; Heinrich Fries, *Nihilismus, die Gefahr unserer Zeit*, Stuttgart 1949.

³² These include Walter Ulbricht, *Die Partei neuer Typus*, Berlin 1948; Otto Grotewohl, *Die geistige Situation der Gegenwart und der Marxismus*, Berlin 1948; Walter Ulbricht, *Welche Stellung zur Sowjetunion liegt im nationalen Interesse des deutschen Volkes?*, in: Ulbricht, *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. II, Berlin 1953, p. 544 ff.; Wilhelm Pieck/Anton Ackermann, *Unsere kulturpolitische Sendung. Reden auf der Ersten zentralen Kulturtagung der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands vom 3.-5. Februar 1946*, Berlin 1946; Anton Ackermann, *Um die Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur*, Berlin 1946; Erklärung des Parteivorstandes der SED vom 19. September 1946. *Die SED zur Grenz-frage*, in: *Dokumente der SED*, Vol. 1, Berlin 1952, p. 92 f.

The prehistory of National Socialism is at the same time the exposition of the decline of bourgeois ideology, for the principles of Nazi state ideology did not spring from the confused brain of the creator of a millennial empire, but have increasingly dominated the philosophy and world view of a large part of the German bourgeoisie since the end of the 19th century."³³ He showed how the racist teachings of de Gobineau, Chamberlain and the geopolitical theories of Karl Haushofer and Johann-Rudolf Kjellen were taken up by the imperialist bourgeoisie, combined with anti-communism and finally brought to perfection in fascist ideology.

He dealt extensively with the philosophy and moral theory of Friedrich Nietzsche and traced the historical consequences of its devastating influence, especially among the bourgeois intelligentsia in Germany. "Through his teachings, a part of the intelligentsia was prepared, dulled, unquestioningly and at the same time intoxicatingly inflamed. The fact that Nietzsche's teachings were able to exert such a decisive influence is a symptom of the intellectual crisis that had already afflicted a large part of the German bourgeoisie ... The increasing decline of humanist ideas is revealed by a philosophy which, with its appeal to myth and instinct, to sentiment and the master race, obscures the clarity of classical philosophy and silences the conscience."³⁴ He also convincingly exposed Oswald Spengler's philosophy of history as one of the sources from which the fascist ideologues had assembled the state ideology of the Hitler regime. "From Spengler's gloomy and misanthropic teachings, the threads lead not only to Rosenberg, Dinter and Moeller van den Bruck, but also directly to Hitler's work of art 'Mein Kampf', to end up today with the new disease of our time, existentialism."³⁵

Opposing the bourgeois conceptions of freedom as part of the theory of totalitarianism, the Marxists made it clear that scientific socialism's view of the freedom of the individual necessarily includes the question of the social preconditions and foundations for this freedom. No doubt was left that Marxism strives for the freedom of the individual precisely by overcoming the freedom of exploitation and uses it for the purpose of the all-round development of man as a personality and the creation of a truly human social order.

In order to effectively counter the revival of reactionary traditions by the imperialist post-war ideology in Germany and to further push back its influence on the thinking of broad sections of the population, the Marxists combined the uncovering of the intellectual sources of fascist ideology and the unmasking of attempts to activate them with the dissemination of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. The presentation of the relationship between the Marxist-Leninist world view and progressive intellectual traditions played a major role in this. This was particularly necessary because a deeply rooted anti-communist prejudice in the German bourgeois intelligentsia was the view that the Marxist world view negated classical bourgeois philosophy and culture.

At the 1st Cultural Conference of the KPD in February 1946, the revolutionary party of the German working class had already made it widely visible that the German working class was not only the most consistent fighter against fascism and intellectual barbarism, but also the best custodian of the progressive heritage of German culture and science. Here she professed a militant humanism, for which the agreement of political, economic and cultural-spiritual objectives is characteristic and which, as a spiritual basis, made possible the joint action of all anti-fascist and democratic forces in the destruction of fascism and imperialism.³⁶

³³ Otto Grotewohl, Im Kampf um die einige deutsche demokratische Republik. Speeches and essays, vol. 1: 1945-1949, Berlin 1954, p. 190.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 194.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 197 f.

³⁶ See Ackermann, Um die Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur.

The militant humanism of the KPD expressed both the continuity of all humanist intellectual development and the qualitative difference to pre-Marxist and modern bourgeois forms of humanist thought. Anton Ackermann commented on this in his speech: "Of course, we cannot ignore the weakness of bourgeois humanism. It consisted in the fact that it was the purely intellectual movement of mainly a thin, highly educated class ... When we speak of militant humanism, we mean making the demands of these intellectual greats the demands of the people, in order to bring the high rights of man down from heaven to earth. Humanism must be turned from a dream into reality, that is our goal!"³⁷

The active, reality-changing function of militant humanism emphasized by Ackermann is shown by the fact that the KPD did not separate the cultural-spiritual renewal of Germany from the political struggle for a consistently democratic development, but rather pursued the humanist goals in the intellectual-cultural sphere - breaking the monopoly on education, free development opportunities for all working people, eradication of all fascist and militaristic ideas from schools and cultural institutions, freedom of scientific research and artistic creation, cultivation of the humanist heritage, etc. - with the demand for the elimination of the socio-economic causes underlying Germany's cultural and intellectual decline. Therefore, the 1st Cultural Conference of the KPD, whose political significance went far beyond the scope of a cultural conference, proved to be groundbreaking for the understanding of the relationship between Marxism-Leninism and the intellectual-cultural heritage and the anti-fascist-democratic cultural revolution and the alliance of all anti-fascist-democratic forces in this process.

In view of the intensifying anti-communist agitation of the imperialist forces against the anti-fascist and democratic development in East Germany, and above all against the deepening alliance of the working class with the intelligentsia, the party was keen to comprehensively clarify the relationship between the Marxist-Leninist world view and the [373] classical bourgeois cultural heritage. In a number of essays, speeches and articles, this relationship was justified as a necessary and inner relationship that had become historical. It was demonstrated why and how the working class preserves the great humanist traditions of German philosophy, science and art in its world view and continues them for the benefit of the people. All attempts to negate the qualitative difference between Marxism and bourgeois humanism in a revisionist manner and to ignore the continuity of both in a sectarian-dogmatic manner were unequivocally rejected.

The SED's 1st Culture Day in May 1948 and the work of leading SED functionaries ushered in a new upswing in the ideological debate with bourgeois ideology. This was expressed, among other things, in the increasing number of Marxist publications, especially articles in the magazines "Einheit", "Aufbau", "Neue Welt" and in the daily press, which analyzed the intellectual sources of fascist ideology and the newly forming imperialist post-war ideology in the western occupation zones.

In accordance with the actual revolutionary change in social conditions and as part of these changes, the consistent confrontation with fascism, its nature and its sources contributed decisively to the fact that fascism and its ideology were finally and forever removed from the ground in East Germany and the spirit of peace and progress, humanism and socialism entered the minds of the people.

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³⁷ Deutsche Volkszeitung, from February 15, 1946.

Werner Kowalski/Siglinde Thom: Conceptions of Fascism in the Socialist Workers' International

With the founding of the Socialist Workers' International (SAI) at the unification congress of the II. International and the centrist International Working Committee of Socialist Parties, the so-called 2½. The Second International, which took place in Hamburg from 21 to 25 May 1923, ended the splintering of the reformist workers' movement into two international centers that had existed since 1921. The two main branches of the workers' movement that still exist today, the communist and the social democratic, finally emerged at international level. The SAI, the largest political organization of the international workers' movement at the time, included the workers' parties whose leadership pursued a reformist policy. According to statistics published by the SAI since 1925 on the occasion of its congresses, these parties had the following membership and voter base.

Table 1

Total number of members and voters of the SAI parties (1925 to 1931)

Year	Countries	Parties	Members	Votes
1925	30	40	6.285.415	2.5600.000
1928	32	45	6.637.622	25.204.375
1931	32	45	6.204.112	26.400.689

Source: Data calculated according to the overviews from the minutes of the 1925, 1928 and 1931 congresses of the SAI. See Second Congress of the Socialist Workers' International, Marseille, August 22-27, 1925, Berlin 1925, p. 231 f.; Third Congress of the Socialist Workers' International, Brussels, August 5 to 11, 1928, Zurich 1928, p. IV, 164 f.; Fourth Congress of the Socialist Workers' International, Vienna, July 25 to August 1, 1931, Zurich 1932, p. IV, 187 f.

The SAI's sphere of influence was limited to the capitalist states of Europe. Its affiliated parties and the reformist trade unions influenced by them had a mass base among the working classes in this region. A survey of SAI members and voters for the year 1928, the peak of reformist mass influence, contains the following data for the strongest social democratic parties (see Table 2).

Because of this influential role in the political life of the imperialist states of Europe, as well as the mass base in the working class and among other working classes, the position of social democracy in the anti-fascist struggle was of [376] great, and in most of these countries of decisive importance. It had a direct impact on the alliance policy, the mobilization of the working masses and, as far as the SAI was concerned, on the implementation of international actions of the working class against fascism and the danger of war. Whether fascism could be fought with all available means and methods, including unity of action with communists, depended decisively on the willingness of the leaders of the SAI to consistently and resolutely represent the class interests of the working classes organized in its ranks against fascism. Their theoretical ability to expose the imperialist class character of fascism also depended on this.

Table 2

Numbers of members and voters of the SAI parties in 1928 (broken down by country)

Countries	Members	Votes	Percentages
Belgium	597.971	820.650	39,4
Bulgaria	30.126	60.000	3,7*
Denmark	148.492	497.106	37,2
Germany	867.671	9.146.165	31,2*
Estonia	4.500	119.914	22,9

Countries	Members	Votes	Percentages
Finland	37.722	257.572	28,3
France	99.106	1.692.960	16,3*
Great Britain	3.338.286	5.487.620	34,0
Italy (illegal)			
Latvia	5.000	260.000	33,0
Lithuania	2.000	(170.000)	19,2*
Netherlands	52.904	706.704	22,9
Austria	683.786	1.539.635	42,3
Poland	63.406	1.115.000	15,5*
Sweden	203.338	725.844	40,9
Switzerland	36.072	195.768	25,0
Czechoslovakia	184.960	1.042.443	15,3*
Hungary	138.472	126.854	5,7*

* Percentage of parliamentary seats.

Source: Third Congress of the Socialist Workers' International, Brussels, August 8. to 11, 1928, Zurich 1928, p. IV, 164.

The process of recognizing the nature and function of fascism in the ranks of the Comintern was also dependent on the development of fascism itself on the one hand, and on the practical experiences of the working class in the anti-fascist struggle on the other.¹ However, the Comintern had always taken the imperialist class nature of fascism as its starting point in its documents and analyses since 1921, ever since it began to deal with fascism. It stated that under the conditions of the new epoch of the victories of socialism and the decline of the capitalist social formation that had dawned with the Great October Socialist Revolution, the bourgeoisie in a number of countries would attempt to assert its rule by all means of terror.

[377] and violence. It saw the most effective means of combating this policy of imperialist reaction in the mobilization of the working masses.

Opportunism's rejection of the proletarian class standpoint, which had led to its open collaboration with the bourgeoisie in the First World War and during the revolutionary post-war crisis, was decisive for the theoretical production of international reformism, which was organizationally united in the SAI. The basic reformist theses of the unlimited possibilities of expanding bourgeois democracy, of peaceful growth into socialism and of the class indifference of the state were essentially based on non-Marxist views of the character of the epoch and of the nature of the imperialist stage of capitalist development that distorted historical development.

Reformist views of imperialism, insofar as such views were held at all, were directed above all against V. I. Lenin's insight that imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, with monopoly as its economic basis, is a rotting, dying capitalism and signifies the eve of the proletarian revolution. Lenin's conclusion, derived from the economic foundations, that imperialism is politically "an urge to violence and reaction in general",² provoked direct opposition from the reformists, who declared that they wanted to banish violence from the class struggle. Lenin took issue above all with Karl Kautsky's conception of imperialism, which, as he wrote, "in all the countries of the world has been rejected by the

"The most respected theoreticians, the leaders of the Second International (Otto Bauer and Co. in Austria, Ramsey MacDonald and others in England, Albert Thomas in France, etc., etc.) together with a plethora of socialists, reformists, pacifists, bourgeois democrats and priests".³

¹ See K. K. Schirinja/Horst Schumacher, *Der Kampf der internationalen Arbeiterbewegung gegen den Faschismus (bis Mitte der 30er Jahre)*, in: *Internationale Tagung der Historiker der Arbeiterbewegung*, Linz, 10-14. 9. 1974, Vienna 1976, p. 3 f.

² V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, in: *Lenin, Werke*, vol. 22, Berlin 1960, p. 273.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

Lenin was particularly opposed to Kautsky's attempt to separate the politics of imperialism from its economics and to his thesis of the "phase of ultra-imperialism", which, in Kautsky's view, is characterized by a phase of "the unification of the imperialisms of the whole world, but not their struggle, a phase of the abolition of wars under capitalism, a phase of the 'common exploitation of the world by internationally allied finance capital'".⁴ Rudolf Hilferding, who was regarded as the economic expert of German social democracy after the split in the labour movement caused by opportunism, adopted Kautsky's method of separating the politics and economics of imperialism when developing his theory of "organized capitalism". This "new capitalism" - Hilferding used this expression in his speech at the founding congress of the SAI - made it possible, in his view, for the working class to dispense with the violent expropriation of the capitalist class. According to Hilferding, the establishment of a socialist society could be achieved through "conscious control of the whole" within the capitalist system, "in other words: the advantages of organization remain, but the faults of capitalism are eliminated".⁵

[378] The illusory orientation of the reformist workers' movement towards "organized capitalism" as an alternative to the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat lacked any deep, Marxist analysis of the development of imperialism under the conditions of the general crisis of capitalism. The parties of the SAI recognized the model of "organized capitalism" as the guiding principle of their politics, despite their commitment to the class struggle and the necessity of "replacing the capitalist mode of production with the socialist mode"⁶, which was anchored in their statutes. The renunciation of the proletarian class struggle in practice was followed by a reference to a class analysis of the character and historical place of imperialism by the reformist workers' parties. This was the main epistemological cause of the failure of the reformist leadership of the SAI to clarify the class nature of fascism. Since the representatives of reformism did not recognize the fundamental connection between imperialism and fascism, they did not combine their anti-fascist stance with the anti-imperialist goal of the proletarian class struggle.

Another premise that determined the conceptions of fascism in the SAI was the replacement of the era's fundamental contradiction between socialism and capitalism with the formal, mechanical contradiction between dictatorship and democracy. The construction of a class-indifferent dictatorship-democracy scheme represented reformism's attempt to negate the successful establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia as a world-historical turning point in the history of human society and as the starting point for the worldwide transition from capitalism to socialism, to distract the working people in the social democratic movement from the actual class contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and to replace the revolutionary class struggle for socialism with the "struggle" for a fictitious "pure democracy". The term "democracy" was equated by reformism with the bourgeois parliamentary system of the imperialist states, while the term "dictatorship" originally only served to characterize the dictatorship of the proletariat established in Russia and thus also provided the main argument for the justification of reformist anti-Sovietism and anti-communism. After the establishment of the first fascist and semi-fascist systems of rule in the early 1920s, leading representatives of social democracy placed fascism and the dictatorship of the proletariat on the same level and called for the defense of bourgeois democracy against a threat not only from the right, but also from the left, from the side of the communists. This view formed the basis of the doctrine of totalitarianism, which was developed by right-wing social-democratic leaders in the SAI to become the predominant concept of fascism.

⁴ Ibid., p. 275.

⁵ Minutes of the First International Socialist Workers' Congress, Hamburg, May 21-25, 1923, Berlin 1923, p. 58 f.

⁶ Ibid., Appendix, p. 2.

Irrespective of the community of interests with imperialism, which drew epistemological boundaries for the representatives of opportunism in their class analysis of fascism, fascism proved to be the worst, most dangerous and most irreconcilable enemy of the social-democratic workers' movement. For this reason, all branches of the workers' movement were objectively interested in fending off fascism or, where it had seized power, in overthrowing it. Throughout the SAI's existence, there were also spokesmen in its leading bodies who took into account the common interests of all working classes in the anti-fascist struggle [379]. After the seizure of power by German fascism, these forces could rely on a mass base in the social democratic movement. The anti-fascist struggle intensified the class contradiction in the SAI between the representatives of an opportunist policy in the interests of the imperialist system and those of an anti-imperialist policy in the interests of the working masses.

The founding congress of the SAI took place at a time when the revolutionary workers' movement had suffered a temporary defeat in most imperialist countries and the bourgeoisie had moved to consolidate and expand its power by all means, including the establishment of militarist and fascist regimes. The leaders of international social democracy were confronted with this development and the resulting dangers. In an appeal "To the Socialist Workers of All Countries", which was unanimously adopted by a joint organizing committee of the executives of the Second International and the International Working Committee of Socialist Parties in preparation for the Unification Congress on 5/6 January 1923, the new situation in the international class struggle was assessed as follows: "In both the political and economic fields, reaction is intensifying its attacks from day to day. The general offensive of the bourgeoisie finds its most pronounced expression in the bloody Horthy regime in Hungary, the victorious fascism in Italy and the crusaders in Germany, but it is unleashed in all countries."⁷ The representatives of the Preparatory Committee derived from this the task for the struggle of the proletariat to "concentrate all its forces in this situation in order to oppose the reactionary machinations of the bourgeoisie with a solid and combative defensive front".⁸

Under the influence of the international offensive of the bourgeoisie, the leaders of international social democracy addressed the problem of fascism in greater detail at the founding congress of the SAI than at the subsequent congresses in Marseilles in 1925 and Brussels in 1928. However, the rapprochement between the two international centers of reformism, which ultimately led to the founding of the SAI, took place in a heated atmosphere of anti-Sovietism and anti-communism. In his opening speech, Otto Wels, Chairman of the SPD, therefore not only described the aim of the SAI to be founded as the "defeat of world reaction", but also saw it as building a dam against "the muddy wave of the communist movement".⁹ These irreconcilable contradictions in objectives also characterized the discussions held at the Hamburg Congress on the agenda item "The international struggle against international reaction". Otto Bauer, representative of the 2½. International, emphasized in his speech on this agenda item: "Reaction is on the advance internationally today. There is certainly no delegation at this congress that would not be urged to complain about the reaction in their own countries."¹⁰ From this he derived as the most important task for the congress "to single out from all the reactionary phenomena those which, viewed internationally, are the most important, to recognize them here, to determine them, to become clear about their nature and to concentrate the forces of the entire international proletariat against the decisive positions of power of reaction".¹¹

⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

¹¹ Ibid.

[380] In contrast to the representatives of Marxist-Leninist theory, who explained the increased tendencies towards reaction and violence by the monopolies' striving for unrestricted economic and political domination, the leaders of the SAI saw the main cause of the increased tendencies towards reaction and violence at that time primarily in the aftermath of the imperialist world war. "The war has left all over the world," stated the resolution of the Hamburg Congress, "as one of its most disastrous effects, the tendency to settle political and economic questions by force."¹² In this sense, Bauer defined fascism in Italy and Horthy's dictatorship in Hungary at the Hamburg Congress as a "violent, violence-drunk, gun-toting praetorian guard"¹³, and Wels named the active forces of the German counter-revolution as "born landsknecht natures" and the "declining middle classes, who are desperately struggling with misery and are therefore ready for any adventure". He described the fascist movement in Germany as the "mischief of secret gangs".¹⁴

From this position, from which only the consequences of the imperialist world war could be pointed out, a certain connection between capitalism and fascism was recognized, but without the imperialist class character of fascism and its conditions of existence in the new epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism being grasped. In principle, many representatives of reformism held the view from the outset that fascism was an autonomous political force, relatively independent of the bourgeois class, but used for its class interests. The thesis of the autonomy of the fascist dictatorship found its strongest expression in the theory that characterized fascism as the dictatorship of the petty bourgeoisie. This theory, which had already been put forward at the Hamburg Congress, essentially determined the Social Democrats' views on fascism in the following years, especially during the world economic crisis, which was associated with the growing danger of fascism in Germany.

While Bauer's speech focused on the struggle against international reaction and warned the working class of the dangers of counter-revolutionary intervention in Soviet Russia, Rafael Abramovič, the speaker of the Second International on the agenda item "The international struggle against international reaction", was dominated by the basic theses of the doctrine of totalitarianism. Abramovič slandered the USSR as a "system of dictatorship and despotism", which was allegedly "a danger to democracy and freedom throughout the world".¹⁵

At the Hamburg Congress of the SAI, the doctrine of totalitarianism already played a key role in the confrontation with fascism in several respects. This doctrine, which was intended to theoretically underpin the liberal-bourgeois and social-democratic positions that were hostile to both fascism and real socialism in the USSR, overlaid and influenced all other reformist views of fascism in the SAI. Closely linked to the defamation of the victorious proletarian revolution in Russia and the defeated revolutionary struggles of the working class in other European countries, such as Hungary and Italy, [381] was the view that communism and the revolutionary struggles of the working class led by the communist parties had provoked fascist reaction in the first place and were thus ultimately responsible for the establishment of fascist dictatorships in Italy and Hungary to the same extent as imperialist reaction.

Karl Kautsky had formulated the keywords for such slander in a pamphlet that appeared before the founding of the SAI: "Only in highly backward regions, where the political alphabets under communist leadership succeeded in dragging even the educated sections of the working class away with them to senseless activity, do we find a true counter-revolution, as in Hungary. As in all things, Russia is completely unique. Since its revolution is still essentially a

¹² Ibid., Appendix, p. II.

¹³ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 37.

bourgeois, it also follows the 'law of development of bourgeois society' and points to the 'Excess of revolutionary activity' is followed by the inevitable reaction, which in turn overshoots the mark by far."¹⁶ Sigmund Kunfi, who spoke at the Hamburg Congress as a representative of the Hungarian Social Democrats, argued similarly: "But another force has led to the proletariat suffering such appalling defeats, that is the example of Russian communism, the transfer of Bolshevik methods to Central and Western Europe. If these treacherous methods had not been adopted, neither in Italy nor in Hungary would the brutal counter-revolution have been able to establish its rule."¹⁷ Wels took the same position for Germany when he described "Moscow communism" and "Parisian militarism" as helpers of the German revolution.¹⁸

The doctrine of totalitarianism served the SAI as a theoretical justification for anti-communism and as a justification for the rejection of unity of action with the communists and proved to be the greatest obstacle to a scientific analysis of fascism. The delegates at the founding congress of the SAI saw "an extremely effective weapon"¹⁹ in the anti-fascist struggle, not in the unity of action of the working class, but in the "enlightenment of world public opinion" about fascist reaction.

To the extent that the collaboration of reformist politicians in the bourgeois state apparatus expanded during the period of relative stabilization and reformism switched to propagating the supposedly stable development perspectives of capitalism, the theories of the necessity of class cooperation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat unfolded. While fascism was still discussed in the context of international capitalist reaction at the Hamburg Congress of the SAI, the problems of fascism were increasingly marginalized in the following years, and it was increasingly seen as an exceptional phenomenon for Italy and for economically and politically backward countries in the Balkans.

With this in mind, the SAI organized two Balkan conferences from 11 to 13 March 1924 and from 12 to 14 June 1925. While the Comintern drew the lessons from the anti-fascist popular uprising against the military-fascist dictatorship [382] in Bulgaria in September 1923 that different layers of the population had to be united into a united front in the struggle against fascism on the basis of common interests, the discussion in the SAI was essentially limited to a condemnation of acts of political violence in Bulgaria. It even characterized the government of the Bulgarian Peasant People's Union under Stambolijski, which was supported by the BKP, as an "arbitrary dictatorship of the smaller part of the peasantry"²⁰, but justified the entry of representatives of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers' Party into the government under Cankov, which came to power through a fascist military coup against the government of the Peasant People's Union.

The discussions at the Second Congress of the SAI, which was held in Marseille in 1925, were completely unfruitful for new, further-reaching assessments of fascism. The problem of fascism was not mentioned at all in the resolutions of the congress. The brochure "Fascism in Europe - An Overview", published by Julius Deutsch on behalf of the International Commission to Combat Fascism, can be seen as a reflection of the results reached by the representatives of international social democracy in their analysis of fascism in the 1920s.²¹

¹⁶ Karl Kautsky, *The Proletarian Revolution*, Berlin/Stuttgart 1922, p. 98.

¹⁷ Minutes of the First International Socialist Workers' Congress, p. 73.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Appendix, p. 13.

²⁰ Bulletin of the Socialist Workers' International, London, Vol. 1, 2/1924, p. 1 f.

²¹ The commission was founded in Vienna in 1926 on the initiative of the Republican Protection League in Austria. It was joined by a number of similar associations of social democratic parties in other European countries.

The Commission met in 1926, 1927 and at the same time as the Third Congress of the SAI in Brussels in 1928. The above-mentioned brochure was compiled on the occasion of this meeting. It contains 16 reports on the fascist movement in European countries. These, as well as the foreword written by Deutsch, revealed the full extent of the misery of Reformism's theoretical confrontations with Fascism. Deutsch, chairman of the International Commission for the Defence against Fascism, generalized: "These reports gave a vivid picture of the fact that fascism has become an international phenomenon. It was not a coincidental coincidence of certain circumstances, but the general social development that led bourgeois-capitalist politics in many countries to methods of violence that are usually summarized under the name 'fascism'. Of course, very different things are often referred to in this way. However, since it is not possible for the time being to define the term clearly in view of the confusing abundance of phenomena, we will leave it at the name that has become common for the purposes of reporting."²² Insofar as fascist tendencies and movements were registered in almost all capitalist countries in Europe, fascism was seen as an international phenomenon. The urgent need for "the organized working class to stand up for the democratic form of government with all its strength" was also generally emphasized.²³

However, the Commission's rapporteurs were unable to approach the decisive theoretical insight of seeing fascism as an expression of the anti-democratic, reactionary and aggressive nature of the imperialist big bourgeoisie. Depending on the stage of development of capitalism, they regarded fascism either, as in the countries of the Balkans and Eastern Europe, as an "actual pre-democratic form of rule" or meant "in advanced countries, such as Germany [383] and Austria, that here the proletariat knew how to make such good use of its democratic rights that the propertied classes had had enough of democracy".²⁴ For the Western and Northern European democracies, in particular for Great Britain and France, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, it was stated that "fascism has not attained any significance there".²⁵

In this respect, the rapporteurs of the International Commission for the Defense against Fascism fully confirmed the basic statement of the Third Congress of the SAI, which its president, Émile Vander- velde, drastically formulated as follows: "If you draw a line from Kowno via Krakow and Florence to Bilbao, regardless of the political borders, you are faced with two different parts of Europe: one where horsepower rules, the other where the real horse rules. One where there are parliaments, the other where dictators are in power."²⁶

At the Third Congress of the SAI, which took place in Brussels from August 5 to 11, 1928, the discussion on the problems of fascism was taken up again, especially in reaction to the assessments of the VI World Congress of the Comintern on the international situation and the growth of the fascist danger. The entire congress was characterized by the reformist illusion of the

"organized capitalism". Simply by being prepared to identify their interests with those of the existing system, the leaders of international reformism deprived themselves of any possibility of arriving at further insights into the analysis of fascism. At no other SAI congress had the doctrine of totalitarianism, the slanderous equation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR with fascism, been put forward so forcefully. Already at the opening of the discussion on the agenda item "The world political situation and the international workers' movement", the Menshevik Abramovič, who presided over the meeting together with Filippo Turati, representative of Italian Social Democracy, declared: "The fact that today's chairmanship is held by Italians and Russians has symbolic significance. We are representatives of countries where

²² Fascism in Europe - An Overview, edited by Julius Deutsch, Brussels 1928, p. 3.

²³ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 64 f.

²⁶ Third Congress of the Socialist Workers' International, p. VII, 22.

where democracy has been destroyed. We all come from countries where the proletariat and the broad masses of the people are disenfranchised by a dictatorship. The one by a dictatorship that wants to protect the sacred goods of the nation and no less the sacred goods of the property of capitalism from the onslaught of the proletariat, the other by a dictatorship that wants to lead the proletariat towards a world revolution with division and terror, oppression and an iron fist ... And so these two dictatorships represent a danger for the forward movement of the proletariat, against which it is the duty of the world proletariat to fight with all its energy and strength. By appointing this Presidium today, the Congress testifies that it is aware of this danger and duty."²⁷

Turati, who was the first to speak to the discussion, asserted: "Fascism is the plagiarist of Bolshevism, but it is not only an inverted Bolshevism, it is the essence of Bolshevism itself, which helps the communists by appearing to fight them. For their common slogan is: either fascism or Bolshevism."²⁸ With the exception of the representatives of the British Independent Labor [384] Party, all the other speakers, such as Theodor Dan, Mieczysław Niedziałkowski, Sigmund Kunfi and Vincent Auriol, made their contribution to the doctrine of totalitarianism. Based on their assessments, the congress adopted a manifesto station "To the workers of the whole world", which stated, in line with the doctrine of totalitarianism: "With all our strength we rise up against the dictatorship of a sect or a man, whatever form this dictatorship takes."²⁹

The Italian delegation, which came from a country where fascism had been in power for years, presented a "paper on fascism" to the Brussels congress. This was intended to summarize the Italian labour movement's years of experience with the fascist terror system in order to "grasp the essence of fascism in its depth".³⁰ The authors proved incapable of achieving their goal. They defined fascism "as a personal dictatorship in the service of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat" and linked this to the following question: "But has fascism really fully achieved what the bourgeoisie expected of it? Can fascism really be identified in its essence entirely with the class that brought it about? Or are we not rather witnessing an ongoing process of separations, of splits of the new political organism from the original cell?"³¹ They came to the conclusion that fascism was "also alien to the bourgeoisie".³² "The bourgeoisie, which supported fascism in its struggle against the proletariat and against democracy, is today distancing itself from it and seeking to draw closer to the proletariat in order to re-establish the legitimacy of democracy together with it. As Marx says, the political form that best meets the needs of the capitalist economy is undoubtedly the democratic form."³³ This represented the view that fascism would become increasingly independent in the course of its development and that its dictatorship would be directed against both the proletariat and the interests of the bourgeoisie. On this basis, the authors of the paper compared fascism with 19th century French Bonapartism, despite the completely different historical situation.

The cue for the fascism-Bonapartism theory derived from this was given in the SAI by the Italian Guisepppe Emanuele Modigliani, who explained at its Hamburg congress in 1923 "that fascism today in Italy is nothing other than Bonapartism was in France in its day".³⁴ When

²⁷ Ibid., p. VI, 48.

²⁸ Ibid., p. VII, 49.

²⁹ Ibid., p. IX, 6.

³⁰ Lecture on Fascism, Brussels 1928, p. 1.

³¹ Ibid., p. 7.

³² Ibid., p. 8.

³³ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁴ Minutes of the First International Socialist Workers' Congress' p. 39.

Bauer's theory of the "balance of class forces" can be considered the basis for the Bonapartism theory.³⁵ With this theory, Bauer attempted to justify the failed coalition policy of the Austrian Social Democrats with the bourgeois parties at the beginning of the 1920s. Based on Mach's positivist positions, Bauer selectively transferred Marx and Engels' assessments of the course of the bourgeois revolution of 1848 and Bonapartism in France to the period after the First World War. He did not take into account the fundamental insights of historical materialism, above all the Marxist theory of the state and its application to the imperialist stage [385] of capitalism. As a consequence, Bauer's theory meant a separation of the political rule of fascism from its economic basis and thus a concealment of its class character. Alongside the doctrine of totalitarianism and the theory of the middle class, the Bonapartism theory was one of the fundamental conceptions of fascism advocated by reformist leaders in the SAI. Due to its Marxist draping, it was a specific expression of reformist social analysis.

The outbreak of the world economic crisis shook the entire edifice of reformist theories, as they had been formulated under the conditions of the relative stabilization of capitalism. Closely linked to the illusions about the secure, crisis-free development prospects of capitalism and the possibilities of peaceful growth into socialism were the assessments that fascism could only prevail in economically and politically backward countries. In the wake of the world economic crisis, however, fascist tendencies intensified throughout Europe, and in Germany in particular, fascism became an unmistakable danger. In the report of the SAI secretariat to the 4th Congress, which took place in Vienna from July 25 to August 1, 1931, the assessment had to be made that "Fascism has crossed the boundary which only a few years ago seemed to have been drawn for it by the development of modern technology".³⁶

However, such corrections were only made to the extent that the advance of fascist reaction had already created a *fait accompli*. This did not entail any fundamentally new assessments of the class character of fascism and its international form. For the analysis of fascism and the dangers associated with it for the working class and all other democratic forces, as they arose under the changed conditions of the world economic crisis and the class struggle at the beginning of the 1930s, the assessment of the development of the mass base of fascism came to the fore.

The SAI also dealt with this aspect. At its Vienna congress, the increased danger of fascism in Germany was derived primarily from the social and economic effects that the world economic crisis was having on the middle classes. Theories about fascism as a petty-bourgeois movement in class terms, which had already been advocated in various ways in the ranks of the SAI, were thus taken up and applied to the specific international situation during the world economic crisis. The report to the congress stated that the "advance of the fascist danger is in its essence linked to the economic processes which have brought the middle classes of society into a frontal position against capitalism - distorted by fascist propaganda - and large sections of the peasantry into severe hardship and filled many unemployed with hopelessness".³⁷

At the same level was the attempt by some reformist leaders to reduce the reasons for the crisis of the bourgeois parliamentary system to the political incapacity of the "middle classes sinking into misery" and the "untrained, unorganized workers". Overheated nationalism

³⁵ L. Hornik, Zur Faschismustheorie Otto Bauers, in: Internationale Tagung der Historiker der Arbeiterbewegung, p. 143 ff.; G. Botz, Genesis und Inhalt der Faschismustheorien Otto Bauers, in: International Review of Social History, 1974, p. 28 ff.

³⁶ Fourth Congress of the Socialist Workers' International, p. I, 3; see also p. VI, 92 and p. VII, 4.

³⁷ Ibid., p. I, 3 f.

and a lack of understanding for the value of democracy and the parliamentary system were seen as the causes of these forces' call for a dictator.³⁸

[386] The fact that reformism remained essentially attached to the theory of the middle class in its class analysis of fascism was an expression of a dangerous underestimation of the fascist danger. For social reformism, the extent of this danger was not determined by the intensity of the efforts of the forces of imperialist finance capital to realize its reactionary goals with the help of a fascist dictatorship, but by the strength and influence of the fascist parties in the individual countries of Europe, above all in Germany.

At the Vienna Congress of the SAI, the means of combating fascism were primarily derived from the answer to the question of how the effects of the crisis on the middle classes could be mitigated and how the fascist movement could be kept away from political power. For this reason, the SAI proposed a "large-scale international credit action"³⁹ for the German economy to foreign capital at its Vienna congress and also approved the SPD's policy of toleration, despite isolated protests. The theory of the middle class gave the representatives of the SAI the pretext of seeing the bourgeois parties as suitable allies and coalition partners in the fight against fascism. Internationally, they hoped for "conscious action by the governments"⁴⁰, which, according to Vandervelde himself, were forced to realize "that the economic catastrophe in Germany and Central Europe would really be the catastrophe of Europe and the whole world. Hence the Lausanne resolutions. Hence the plans that are being worked out everywhere for the coming economic conference."⁴¹ For the struggle against the fascist danger in Germany, "in the midst of the complete decomposition of the middle parties ... the Center Storm and the Iron Front of the working class"⁴² were regarded as a bulwark against fascism. On the other hand, a unity of action with the communist movement and an orientation towards the anti-fascist unity of the working class was strictly rejected, based on the doctrine of totalitarianism that was still upheld.

The fascism brought to power in Germany in 1933, which first turned against the workers' movement with unbridled counter-revolutionary terror, which openly declared its intentions of aggression against other peoples, especially those of the USSR, revealed the true class character of fascism as the dictatorship of finance capital more clearly than previously established fascist regimes. The transfer of power to fascism in Germany in 1933 had to become an impetus for the leaders of the SAI to reconsider all their previous conceptions of fascism, including the methods and means of fighting and overcoming it, in view of the fact that one of their most influential parties, the SPD, was destroyed shortly afterwards, while other parties were seriously endangered by the international offensive of fascism.

The debates on these problems were extremely heated in the SAI parties in 1933. This was also reflected at the SAI conference in Paris on August 21-22, 1933. It was announced as a forum for a general debate, as a "decisive turning point" in the SAI's fight against fascism. Oskar Pol-[387]lak wrote in "Kampf": "The SAI intends to put the three great problems of the present: the behavior of the socialist parties in the event of war, the ways to conquer power and the question of the unification of the world proletariat on the agenda of an international conference."⁴³ In fact, the only item on the agenda in Paris was the "strategy and tactics of the international workers' movement in the period of fascist reaction".

³⁸ See Karl Kautsky, Einige Ursachen und Wirkungen des deutschen Nationalsozialismus, in: Der [386] Kampf, 6/1933, p. 242; F. Brügel, Nationalsozialistische Ideologie, in: Der Kampf, 3/1931, p. 117.

³⁹ Fourth Congress of the Socialist Workers' International, p. VI, 94.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ International Information for Press Purposes, 33/1932, p. 468.

⁴² Ibid., 25/1932, p. 372.

⁴³ O. Pollak, What to do, in: Der Kampf, 2/1933, p. 44.

Representatives of social democratic parties from 27 countries, mainly in Europe, as well as six invited international organizations, including the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), took part in the conference, which was important for the orientation of the SAI in the anti-fascist struggle. In his opening address, Friedrich Adler, the secretary of the SAI, appealed to the conference participants to equip the working class theoretically for the anti-fascist struggle: "And therefore, comrades, we must not only call for active struggle against fascism from this conference, but this conference must provide intellectual tools for the workers of all countries to continue victoriously in this struggle against fascism."⁴⁴ At the same time, Adler doubted that the parties of the SAI would find a unified platform in the struggle against fascism. He explicitly drew a parallel with the founding congress of the SAI in 1923, where, as in 1933 in the fight against fascism, the SAI had already been unable to formulate a programme recognized by all parties.⁴⁵

At the Paris conference, individual representatives of various parties, e.g. from France, Italy, Poland, Belgium, Estonia and the USA, but also from Austria and Germany, were probably looking for new starting points for the assessment of fascism. At this plenary session, even a left-wing social democratic opposition emerged with its own platform. But the majority there continued to put forward the old, unsuitable fascism theories of reformism. After the crushing defeat of his party, the chairman of the SPD, Wels, on whose contribution the conference had particularly high expectations, quoted for pages from a speech he had given on fascism in Germany at the Hamburg Congress in 1923. At the center of these quotes was the anti-communist doctrine of totalitarianism, then the view that the petty-bourgeois social mass base also constituted the essence of fascism, as well as the assertion that the rise of fascism in Germany was primarily caused by the consequences of the First World War, above all by the Versailles Treaty system imposed on Germany. Wels was firmly convinced that his analysis of 1923 was still sufficient in 1933: "Comrades! If I had given the speech from 1923 I quoted earlier today, it would not need to be reformulated. It is still relevant today."⁴⁶ The doctrine of totalitarianism and the assessment of fascism as a petty-bourgeois movement was also advocated by other speakers at the Paris conference of the SAI and approved by the majority of the conference.

[388] Speakers from a minority, on the other hand, mostly those who professed the left social democratic platform at the conference, endeavored to draw further theoretical conclusions from the events in Germany. Pietro Nenni saw them as a refutation of reformism, especially the reformist policy of coalition with the bourgeoisie. For him, the "events in Germany were the culmination of revisionist and reformist experiences"; above all, they confirmed the truth once shared by all socialists "that no truly democratic politics, no socialist politics is possible on the basis of capitalist property".⁴⁷ Siegfried Aufhäuser also warned the SAI against continuing to succumb to reformist illusions about bourgeois democracy and the exclusively parliamentary path to socialism. In contrast, representatives of the social democratic parties in Sweden, Denmark and Czechoslovakia, for example, emphatically defended their bourgeois coalition practice.

Appeals to bring about a strategic turnaround in the anti-fascist struggle were heard very forcefully at the SAI's Paris conference, such as the one quoted below from Aufhäuser: "I would like to say that this congress, after the terrible shock that is still shaking us all, has brought about a great change in the anti-fascist struggle.

⁴⁴ Minutes. International Conference of the Socialist Workers' International, Paris, August 21-25, 1933, (hereinafter: Minutes), Glashütten i. T. 1976, p. 15.

⁴⁵ "If we had attempted to put together a large programme, it would have taken a very long time and we probably would not have reached organizational agreement" (ibid., p. 6).

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 107.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 3 ff.

It has taken on the task of thinking. It should take stock of its own movement, it should analyze the political situation, determine the nature of fascism and, if I understand the purpose correctly, it should make it clear that this conference brings the center of will for overcoming fascism and the path to socialism."⁴⁸ Aufhäuser drew attention to the processes and connections that formed the economic basis of fascism: "All these workers see the transformations of capitalism, they have seen how international interdependencies are today overgrown by autarchy, how the liberal political world view of capitalism has turned into the following of despotism, they have seen how the free play of forces has ended since organized capitalism, so they see these great transformations of capitalism and they demand an answer from us. I don't think we should be inclined to expect state capitalist experiments to bring us closer to a socialist society. I see in these state capitalist experiments in controlling the economy through political despotism rather the prevention of socialism as we imagine it. Here the task arises for the International to work out the firm will for the future shaping of the economy, not a finished program, but the willingness to create a place for this conference or to commission suitable leading personalities of our movement to think about these changes."⁴⁹

Bauer, too, without departing from his Bonapartist theory of the state, called for theoretical analyses to show "how the capitalist world, in its disruption, resorts to new social forms that make the state the master of the economy to a rapidly growing extent. How, where fascism triumphs as a result of the class antagonisms exacerbated by the crisis of capitalism, the power of the state over the economy means a terrible strengthening of the despotic power of the fascist [389] state and thus the slavery of the whole people, which after a short time must fill the whole people with the will to re-conquer the most elementary freedoms."⁵⁰ But Bauer also added to such considerations, which could pave new paths for the social democratic analysis of fascism: "I believe that much more could and should be said. But we are not yet prepared for this. Socialist theory, socialist literature, has not yet drawn the consequences from the present situation."⁵¹

In the Left Social Democratic platform, which was formulated at the Paris conference of the SAI in speeches by Paul Henri Spaak⁵², the representative of the "Left and Young Socialists", and by Jean Zyromski, one of the most consistent advocates of the united front with communists in the SAI, and in the minority resolutions, the most realistic assessment of the class struggle conditions after the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany and of the necessary tactical tasks in the struggle against fascism and the danger of war was given before the plenum of the SAI. In its theoretical definition of the class function of fascism, the resolution also went beyond the reformist views prevalent in the SAI. The most important assessments in the resolution were as follows :⁵³

- The Hitler dictatorship is the most brutal of all capitalist dictatorships and is directed first and foremost against the labor movement;
- the bourgeoisie abandoned its own legality in defense of its privileges. Capitalism itself became fascist;
- the strength of the working class is paralyzed by its division. The reformist policy of social democracy, especially its class collaboration, is also a cause of the weakness of the proletariat in the struggle against fascism;

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 178.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 185.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 279.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 280.

⁵² P. H. Spaak was given the mandate to speak at the Paris conference of the SAI "on behalf of the left and the young socialists". This does not mean that he stood on left-wing social democratic positions then or later.

⁵³ See minutes, p. 321 ff.

- The working class must also represent the perspective interests of the middle classes impoverished by the crisis through a concrete program;
- The struggle against fascism and the threat of war requires the unity of the working class at an international level and in every country.

Compared to the views of the conference majority, this assessment was a major step forward, without reaching the depth and precision of the scientific definition of the class character of fascism drawn up by the Comintern at the same time. Since the Left Social Democratic representatives did not see the class basis of fascism in finance capital either, they too lacked an understanding of the communist tactics of the united front and of the communists' struggle to maintain or reclaim democratic rights and freedoms.

Regardless of the existing shortcomings and weaknesses, the assessments of the left group at the Paris conference created a basis for the correct class evaluation of fascism and, above all, for the realization of the necessity of the united struggle of all forces of the workers' movement against fascism. More than progress in theory, this insight was brought about by the many years of experience [390] of the working class with fascism and the turning of more and more social-democratic workers to the revolutionary class struggle.

Under the impression of this development, some of the Social Democratic leaders now spoke out more resolutely in favour of the application of revolutionary tactics, in particular for the mobilization of the working masses and for unity of action with communists in the anti-fascist struggle - despite their mostly still existing anti-communist reservations. However, the Left Social Democratic draft of a "resolution on workers' unity", which called for the establishment of joint actions with the Comintern, only received 19 out of 314 votes cast at the SAI's Paris conference. In contrast, the resolution with an anti-communist orientation was adopted by a large majority, which is indicative of the balance of power in the SAI's leadership bodies. Not only that.

The Paris Conference of August 1933, at which the leaders of the SAI dealt with the most comprehensive problems of fascism during its entire exile, remained the last plenary discussion. All later important contributions to the social democratic analysis of fascism, such as those of Otto Bauer and Max Adler or those of parties and groups of the social democratic movement prepared for a united and popular front, were no longer discussed in the SAI forum, and were usually not even acknowledged by the office and the executive. Basically, the SAI, in which the right-wing social democratic forces dominated more than at the party base, had no conceptual approach to fascism, even in the theoretical debate. The theories on fascism, like all the theorizing of social democracy at the time, served primarily to justify reformist policies. The Paris conference of the SAI and its development after 1933 thus documented the "profound crisis of the Second International, which came to light and intensified particularly sharply after the bankruptcy of German social democracy".⁵⁴

Georgi Dimitroff assessed the internal development of the SAI, as it became visible from 1933 to 1935, with the following words: "Never before has there been such intellectual confusion in the ranks of the Second International as there is now. A differentiation is taking place within all social-democratic parties. Two main camps are emerging in their ranks: alongside the existing camp of reactionary elements, who are trying by all means to maintain the bloc of Social Democracy with the bourgeoisie and furiously reject the united front with the Communists, the camp of revolutionary elements is beginning to emerge, who harbor doubts about the correctness of the policy of working community with the bourgeoisie, who are in favor of the creation of a united front with the Communists and are beginning to shift more and more to the standpoint of the revolutionary class struggle."⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴ VII Congress of the Communist International, Papers and Resolutions, Berlin 1975, p. 109.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

After 1933, after the transfer of power to fascism in Germany, the Comintern dealt extraordinarily intensively with the clarification of the theoretical and practical questions arising from the new international situation for the anti-fascist struggle of the working class. Above all, it specified the assessment of the class character of fascism, the scientific prerequisite for determining the main thrust of the working class struggle and for establishing [391] a broad anti-fascist alliance. On the basis of the theoretical clarifications, the experience gained in the class struggles of 1933/34 and the differentiations taking place at the same time in the ranks of social democracy, the Seventh Congress of the Comintern very carefully examined the possibilities for a new relationship between Communists and social democrats.

Never before had international social democracy shown greater interest in a consultation of communists than at the VII Congress of the Comintern. Well-known leaders of social democracy, social democratic parties in their entirety, such as those of France, Austria, Italy and Spain, demanded a thorough evaluation of the resolutions of the VII Congress of the Comintern from the Secretariat of the SAI. J. B. Séverac, General Secretary of the SFIO, wrote to Friedrich Adler, Secretary of the SAI, on October 3, 1935: "The Party hopes that, in view of the development of events, the community of action has made great progress on an international scale, which justifies us in hoping that the SAI will not respond to the proposals of the Communist International with a simple rejection. The Party Executive Committee has instructed me to ask you at what stage the information on the results of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International with regard to the Action Community is at, what information the Secretariat has been instructed by the Executive of the SAI to provide."⁵⁶ The latter question concerned the decision of the Executive of the SAI at its meeting of August 16-18, 1935, by which the Secretary of the SAI was instructed to submit a "Report on the VII Congress of the Communist International" for the next consultation.

The Secretariat's internal report, drafted by F. Adler, did not go into the theoretical discussions of the VII Congress of the Comintern on fascism. Rather, the report used the speeches and resolutions of the VII Congress of the Comintern to examine whether - according to reformist standards - the trustworthiness of communists had increased to such an extent that the SAI could respond to their offers to establish anti-fascist unity of action. The report, which runs to several pages and recommends that the SAI reject the unity of action offered by the Comintern, concludes with the following sentence: "The VII Congress of the Communist International has, as has been shown, taken certain steps in the direction of unity of action on the basis of solidarity, but further decisive steps must follow if it is to become possible on an international scale."⁵⁷

In the SAI, until its final dissolution in 1940, especially in connection with the Spanish people's national-revolutionary war against fascism from 1936 to 1939 and the occupation of Austria and Czechoslovakia by German fascism in 1938/39, there continued to be fierce, constantly intensifying disputes between the "camp of reactionary elements" and the "camp of revolutionary elements" over the unity of action with communists. In the SAI, contrary to developments in individual parties, the right-wing social-democratic, anti-communist forces had always prevailed. A theoretical discussion on fascism only took place once in the SAI after 1935, after the Executive had called on the affiliated parties on May 30, 1938, to declare themselves in writing on the subject of fascism.

"Fight for democracy and peace".

The discussion on this topic took place at the executive meeting in Brussels from January 14 to 16, 1939. The fact that fascism meant the destruction of all democracy, counter-revolutionary mass terror and military aggression was clear from previous experience with fascism.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶ International Institute of Social History/Amsterdam, Socialist Workers' International, No. 3043.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

which had also driven large parties of the SAI, such as those of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, into illegality, was not a controversial point of discussion. Opposing views emerged above all on the question of the class content of bourgeois democracy. Representatives of the social democracies of the Netherlands, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany regarded democracy in the sense of traditional reformism not merely as a "means", but also as a "means".

"The goal of socialism". Rudolf Hilferding, who continued to regard democracy as "something absolute", claimed that a simple commitment to democracy was no longer sufficient for social democracy after 1917, but that it was also necessary to reject the dictatorship of the proletariat in the strongest possible terms. The same forces that backed the reformist dictatorship-democracy schema in the discussion also championed the basic thesis of the totalitarianism doctrine, according to which social democracy had to defend democracy "against the fascist and communist danger"⁵⁸ right up to this final phase of the SAI. In terms of tactical orientation, these right-wing Social Democratic leaders not only continued to oppose any unity of action with the Communists, but their most extreme spokesmen, such as Hilferding in this discussion, were of the opinion that even within the SAI there could be no compromise with the "Left Socialists", who represented the "proletarian dictatorship".

In the course of the discussion, Hilferding defined fascism as "the subjugation of the whole of society to a state apparatus that has become a power in itself and must constantly expand this power if it does not want to perish; therefore its will to attack also springs from its inner nature and law".⁵⁹ Fascism, Hilferding continued his explanations based on the theory of Bonapartism, created an opposition that "runs through all classes today", a camp of those who defend "freedom and culture".⁶⁰ At the beginning of 1939, the representatives of such a view in the executive of the SAI, who stripped fascism of any class character, saw the main force in the fight against fascism in a coalition of bourgeois-parliamentary states.

In the Brussels discussion, other leaders of the SAI, including Louis de Brouckère and F. Adler, the president and secretary of the SAI, emphasized the class character and the historical limits of bourgeois democracy more clearly than in previous years. According to Brouckère, it was no longer a question of simply restoring democracy, but of shaping it and extending it to the point of socialism. He now recognized the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat for heightened situations of class struggle, such as a civil war.

Zyromski was the most consistent representative of the left-wing social democratic direction in the SAI, which still had its main base in the parties of France, Spain and Italy:

"But I do not believe in the possibility of passing from the present [393] incomplete to the complete democracy by gradual transition, by the normal play of democracy itself. There will come a moment when the forces that inhibit democracy will make it inevitable that the revolutionary force of the working class will confront them, and that the barriers of legality will become an obstacle on the road to socialism. The suspension of certain forms of democracy becomes necessary in order to triumph over the forces of reaction. The counter-revolution has often triumphed in various countries because the socialist parties did not clearly recognize this necessity."⁶¹ The spokesmen of this left social-democratic direction in the SAI, who oriented themselves towards the anti-imperialist class interests of the working masses in the social-democratic movement, called for a renunciation of traditional reformism, unity of action with the communists and the mobilization of the masses in the anti-fascist struggle. However, they remained a minority in the leading bodies of the SAI.

At all times, the social democratic movement, especially the working-class members of the reformist parties, had taken an anti-fascist stance. The SAI had condemned the

⁵⁸ Ibid., no. 537.

⁵⁹ Ibid., no. 547.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Founded in 1923, the SAI was primarily concerned with fascism's hostility to democracy and its methods of terror. By 1933 at the latest, most SAI leaders also recognized the danger of a new world war associated with fascism.

However, the leaders of the SAI were unable to develop a coherent, scientifically based theory of fascism. Basically, it was the reformist leaders' rejection of Marxism and the proletarian class standpoint and their resulting anti-communism that also blocked their epistemological path to deriving the class nature of fascism from the economic conditions of imperialism. The majority of social democratic leaders refused to derive an anti-fascist strategy and tactics for the workers' movement from their opposition to fascism. The SAI, the international umbrella organization of the social-democratic parties, whose leadership passed completely into the hands of right-wing social-democratic politicians before the outbreak of the Second World War, until its dissolution in 1940, strictly rejected the demands of social democratic members and supporters for active participation in the anti-fascist struggle alongside the communists and all other democratic, anti-imperialist forces and thus played a decisive role in the far-reaching paralysis of the anti-fascist potential of social democracy.

[395]

Heinz Niemann: The Image of Fascism in German Social Democracy from 1922 to 1945

With Mussolini's "March on Rome" in October 1922 and the climax of the first fascist wave in Germany in 1923, fascism became an increasingly important subject of theoretical analysis.

As the assassination of Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau and Adolf Hitler's Munich Bürgerbräu putsch showed, monarchist-folkish and fascist reaction also reared its head in Germany. The occupation of the Ruhr was used by the ruling class to divert attention from the causes of inflation and mass misery through an unbridled whipping up of nationalism and chauvinism and to launch an offensive against the revolutionary forces of the workers' movement led by the KPD. The working class responded with powerful demonstrations, strikes and mass rallies such as the Anti-Fascist Day organized by the KPD on

A general strike led by the KPD finally toppled the Cuno government in August 1923 and signaled the rapid approach of an acute revolutionary crisis.

With the aim of containing the increasing influence of the KPD and the growing willingness of the Social Democratic-led masses to fight, the SPD entered a grand coalition government formed under Gustav Stresemann. In doing so, the right-wing Social Democratic leaders once again stabilized the class rule of the monopoly bourgeoisie. With the express consent of the Social Democratic Reich President Friedrich Ebert, the workers' governments formed by Social Democrats and Communists in Saxony and Thuringia were driven apart by the Reichswehr in October/November 1923.

This political behavior stemmed from reformism's fundamental commitment to the bourgeois state and class collaboration with the bourgeoisie against the proletarian revolution and socialism; the option for capitalism also formed the class basis of the right-wing social democratic assessment of fascism and the political tactics used against it. From this, anti-communism emerged as the main axis of right-wing social democratic politics. In line with this basic orientation, the right-wing leaders saw the main danger to democracy in the years of the revolutionary post-war crisis not in the fascists but in the communists. They also feared the independent activity of the masses, as their "uncontrolled actions" could spontaneously turn against the existing system. And finally, they regarded the defense of the Weimar Republic as a task that could only be solved in alliance with the parties of the liberal bourgeoisie by parliamentary means.

[396] In the field of theory, such a position meant that the SPD never had an independent, unified or even scientific image of fascism, but found itself in the wake of bourgeois ideologues, not unlike the Socialist Workers' International (SAI).¹

Their interpretations of fascism always had an apologetic character, as they, like the entire opportunist ideology, were formulated for the purpose of theoretically justifying the policy of class collaboration and were always subordinated to this policy. Thus, even correct partial insights, which were to be found particularly among left-wing forces in the SAI as well as in the SPD, remained ineffective for policy and strategy.

In the development of the image of fascism in German social democracy, four stages of development can be identified - somewhat simplified - which are characterized by certain differences. The first stage extends from 1922/23 to 1929, the second from 1929 to 1933, the third from 1933 to 1939/40 and finally the fourth from the invasion of the Soviet Union to the end of the Second World War.

¹ See the article by Werner Kowalski/Siglinde, Thorn in this volume, p. 375 ff.

While the international communist movement developed a definition of fascism that is still fully valid, politically fruitful and historically confirmed today in a complicated process of cognition that lasted more than ten years, fascism remained a marginal problem for German social democracy after the end of the revolutionary post-war crisis and was only addressed sporadically and superficially. The leader of the Austrian Schutzbund, Julius Deutsch, who had close ties with German social democracy, wrote immediately after Italian fascism came to power: "The success of Italian fascism also opens up undreamt-of prospects for capitalists in other countries. What was possible on the Tiber and the Po should also be possible on the Danube, the Rhine and the Isar ... Fascism became the international model of the counter-revolutionary method."² However, there was a widespread view in social democracy in the 1920s that fascism was a purely Italian affair and had little chance of developing in highly industrialized countries such as Germany.³

It was therefore characteristic from the outset to underestimate the fascist danger. The social democratic statements on the rise to power of fascism in Italy already contained constitutive elements of an image of fascism that remained valid for the entire subsequent period. For example, an editorial in the "Vorwärts" on October 30, 1922, entitled "Fascist government in Italy", stated that although the bourgeoisie had conjured up fascism, it was preparing to turn against its supporters and patrons; it then went on to say: "The movement has undoubtedly outgrown them and is no longer confined to its intended purposes of remaining a capitalist counterweight to the claims and aspirations of the proletariat. Instead of guarding the bourgeois-capitalist order, fascism, under pressure from the street, is leading a *reactionary oligarchy* that will most likely degenerate into general anarchy."

[397] Incidentally, this article already characterized fascism as "inverted Bolshevism".⁴ Similar statements were circulated in the "Neue Zeit", but also in individual brochures.⁵ At the Berlin party conference of the SPD in 1924, Arthur Crispian, one of the former leaders of the USPD and now chairman of the SPD, claimed: "Bolshevism ends in fascism. We see this in Hungary, in Italy and also in Russia, where basically nothing other than fascism is raging."⁶ The equation of fascism and communism, this core thesis of the doctrine of totalitarianism, was thus a main component of social democratic "analysis" of fascism from the very beginning.

Even for the leftists - with and without quotation marks - in the SPD, it was characteristic that they adhered to the thesis that the communists were to blame for the rise of fascism. This thesis was justified by the aforementioned Austromarxist Deutsch in his 1923 publication "The Fascist Danger" as follows: After the First World War, the masses had been radicalized, which had led to a nominal strengthening of the communists, but without them becoming a real power. But the mere pose of the proletariat developing power was enough for the reaction "to attack the working class with murder and manslaughter. The Bolshevik phrases about the dictatorship of the proletariat and the violence to be used by the working class provided the knockers of the chapter with a highly welcome pretext.

² Julius Deutsch, Die Faschistengefahr, Vienna 1923, p. 516.

³ See Hermann Heller, Europa und der Faschismus, Berlin/Leipzig 1929, p. 5 - Even as late as February 8, 1933 (!), the Social Democratic Vorwärts wrote: "Berlin is not Rome. Berlin will never become the capital of a fascist empire."

⁴ Fascist government in Italy, in: Vorwärts, 30.10.1923.

⁵ Neue Zeit, vol. 1, 1922, no. 6, p. 141 ff.; Oda Olberg, Der Faschismus in Italien, Jena 1923 (Olberg, however, emphasizes the clearly capitalist class character of Mussolini's rule); Karl Kautsky, Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung, Berlin 1927 - For a detailed account, see Helmut Arndt, Zum Faschismusbild der deutschen Sozialdemo (1922-1939), phil. Diss. (B), Leipzig 1970 (Ms).

⁶ Party Congress of the Social Democratic Party of Germany 1924 in Berlin. Minutes, Berlin 1924, p. 49.

to really do everything that the communists only talked about. Italian communism was a Bolshevism of phrase, its opposite, fascism, is a Bolshevism of deed."⁷

Deutsch described Mussolini as the "lord and master of Italy", who "mocked and belittled" the bourgeoisie and left them in no doubt for a moment about how utterly he despised them. The Italian bourgeoisie, however, saw Mussolini as the victor over organized labour, "and therefore readily forgave him for publicly spitting in the face of the bourgeois representatives themselves. The bourgeoisie endured the insult almost with pleasure, since it was connected with the protection of their holy of holies, profit. "Mussolini's victory had brought the experience "that a *certain method* of struggle could be used against the working class".⁸ These statements already reveal the basic features of the Bonapartist schema, which was later to occupy a central position in the social democratic interpretation of fascism.

Deutsch's views can be regarded as roughly representative of the views of the left in German social democracy until 1928/29. However, a comparison with right-wing variants of the social democratic image of fascism in these early years reveals only minimal differences. This becomes particularly clear in two writings by the right-wing Social Democrat Paul Kampffmeyer. In his work "Fascism in Germany", he wrote: "Fed with the money of heavy industry and supported by a nationalist army and police force, the 'Black Shirts' elevated their gang leader Mussolini to dictator of the Italian state after bloody acts of violence against the socialist workers and degraded the king and parliament to the status of will-less instruments of their terroristic rule."⁹ Addressing the elements in the German monopoly bourgeoisie leaning towards fascism, he continued warningly: "In their short-sighted class egoism, the backers of German fascism completely forget that by supporting the National Socialists they are dangerously violating the idea of the state and the national idea."¹⁰

In view of the revelations about the backers of the Nazi party after the Hitler coup, Kampffmeyer wrote: "National Socialism is an organization promoted by all economic and political reactionaries against the pronounced economic, political and social class interests of the German working class."¹¹ He documented the financial support given to the fascists by the Bavarian Industrialists' Association and emphasized that the National Socialists felt "completely united with the heavy industrialists, the German national agrarians, the nationalist generals and separatist monarchist reactionaries of the Bavarian People's Party".¹²

However, the agreement between the right and left in social democracy regarding the denunciation of heavy industry as a promoter of fascism did not last long. Just one year later (1925), the petty bourgeoisie was brought to the fore by right-wing social democrats as the actual promoter of fascism, while the references to finance capital were considerably weakened. For example, Rolf Reventlow wrote in the journal of the reformist ADGB: "Fascism, examined in terms of its economic driving forces, is essentially a struggle of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie and the agrarians, whose power is limited by the development of the labour movement, with the occasional support of finance capital and industry, against the socialist working class."¹³

⁷ German, p. 4.

⁸ Ibid., p. 5 f.

⁹ Paul Kampffmeyer, *Der Faschismus in Deutschland*, Berlin/Stuttgart 1923, p. 3.

¹⁰ Derselbe, *Fascism*, p. 31.

¹¹ Derselbe, *Der Nationalsozialismus und seine Gönner*, Berlin 1924, p. 14.

¹² Derselbe, *National Socialism*.

¹³ Rolf Reventlow, *Die faschistischen Gewerkschaften*, in: *Die Arbeit. Zeitschrift für Gewerkschaftspolitik und Wirtschaftskunde*, ed. by Theodor Leipart, 2/1925, p. 108 - The "middle class theory" was developed primarily by Theodor Geiger, Emil Lederer and Emil Grünberg.

In connection with the "petty bourgeois" theory - which, however, was already in vogue in 1923 - social-psychological explanations of the origins of fascism became increasingly widespread.¹⁴ According to Karl Landauer, fascism resulted from a hatred of the intellect, from the will to merge into a community, [399] from the longing for commitment, from the desire for self-responsibility and from the exaggeration of the idea of the leader.¹⁵

During the years of relative stabilization, fascism was outside the realm of practical politics for the SPD leadership. At best, fascist tendencies were detected in the monarchist circles, but these were denied any current significance.

When Italian fascism moved towards the expansion of the total fascist state after the Matteotti crisis in 1925,¹⁶ this development had to be used by the SPD leadership to justify its policy of class collaboration in the face of criticism from the opposition. From the explanations of the causes of the victory of fascism in Italy, the conclusion was drawn that the economic system had to be protected from shocks and crises so that conditions would not arise which, according to Kautsky, for example, would produce a sufficiently large number of lumpen in their prime for a fascist movement. From this was derived the necessity of the affirmation of the Weimar state and the wholehearted identification of the working class with bourgeois democracy as a means of countering any potential fascist danger. As long as the economy and parliamentary democracy functioned, fascism would remain an exceptional phenomenon and would only pose a real danger to underdeveloped countries in the Balkans, for example.

The possibility of crisis-free capitalism was justified with the theory of "organized capitalism", which served to justify the alliance with the social-liberal wing of big capital. In this context, the concept of fascism as a rebellion of the middle classes gained additional significance. It now served not only to conceal the connection between imperialism and fascism, but also to justify the rejection of the proletarian class character of the SPD and the efforts to win over the middle classes to social democracy.

The inclination of large sections of the middle classes towards fascism could very well be used as a justification for the necessity of an even closer alliance with the traditional upper middle-class coalition partners of social democracy, as well as for the necessity of opening up the party to the "national civil service", intellectuals and all petty-bourgeois classes in general.¹⁷ From this perspective, an anti-imperialist, anti-monopolistic stance by the working class must have appeared to favor fascism, as it could be suitable for scaring off the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois circles to be won over.

The heterogeneity of social democratic views on fascism is most clearly illustrated by the fact that on the extreme right wing even a tendency - which was also represented in the ADGB leadership - took not only an extremely anti-communist but also a petty-bourgeois nationalist position and openly expressed its sympathy for Mussolini. Walter Pahl formulated the views of these "social democrats" most clearly in the "Sozialistische Monatshefte". Pahl initially criticized the equation of fascism and [400] Bolshevism from the right. "Special preference is enjoyed," he wrote,

¹⁴ See, for example, Olberg, p. 10 - Hendrik de Man (Sozialismus und Nationalfaschismus, Potsdam 1931) goes even further in his socio-psychological explanation of fascism. There, and even more directly with Wilhelm Reich (Massenpsychologie des Faschismus, Copenhagen 1933) and finally with Erich Fromm (Die Furcht vor der Freiheit, Zurich 1945), Adorno and Horkheimer's more recent theory of fascism took up the cause, ultimately declaring the masses to be the source and bearer of fascism. See Reinhard Opitz, Über die Entstehung und Verhinderung von Faschismus, in: Das Argument, 87/1974, p. 560.

¹⁵ See Karl Landauer, Zum Niedergang des Faschismus, in: Die Gesellschaft, 8/1925, p. 169 ff.

¹⁶ Palmiro Togliatti, Lessons on Fascism, Frankfurt a. M. 1973, p. 21.

¹⁷ See also: Rudolf Hilferding, Die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie in der Republik, in: Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag 1927 in Kiel. Minutes, Berlin 1927, p. 175, p. 181 f.

"an assessment of fascism on the basis of the 'sign theory', according to which Bolshevism and fascism are mere inversions of each other, dictatorships with different signs. The popularity of this parallel is in inverse proportion to its accuracy. While fascism began as an elementary movement, Bolshevism started from a program with which it now began to rape things in their form of existence."¹⁸ Pahl went on to say that it was completely wrong "to see the unity of Bolshevism and fascism in the organized use of violence. In contrast to Bolshevism, in fascism violence is not a building element of the movement, but rather a phenomenon that often accompanies new political events." One must "realize that the use of violence is not one of the elements that determine the nature of fascism."

While the "Vorwärts" had already declared: "Mussolini's skill lies in having obtained the money from this bourgeoisie, the weapons and impunity from its governing bodies, and then having cheated them in order to replace the previously ruling clique with his clique"¹⁹, Pahl simply claimed: "Fascism's connection with big business was, as is now also clearly recognized in socialist circles, only temporary". There was also "no reason to assume that the ideal will to eliminate the class struggle was a will to suppress the working class". As fascism had in any case "established the supremacy of the state over the economy in Italy", and was moreover a "rootedly Italian entity", one should adopt a "wait-and-see attitude towards the economic and social experiments of fascism".²⁰

As far as left-wing social democratic views of fascism are concerned, their strengths and weaknesses are particularly evident in Siegfried Marck. He wrote in an article in mid-1928:

"But if fascism, as an ideology of anti-liberalism, destroys every remnant of bourgeois idealism, then as a sociological reality it is ultimately all the more compatible with bourgeois class egoism. Through the power of economic legalities, he who wanted to bring the dictatorship of the warring factions and the 'trench aristocracy' over both classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, must become the executor of bourgeois aspirations. Bourgeoisie and fascism mutually corrupt each other in their historical encounter, in that fascism becomes the dictatorship state of the bourgeois class struggle ... The only correct thing about (this) superclass structure is that it was formed from a meeting of different classes, both ideologically and sociologically ... For the bourgeoisie itself, this connection with fascism is the surest symptom of its decline ...' when it no longer creates its own state apparatus, but hands it over to a class-wise undefinable 'Caesarism' ... Fascism is the bourgeois form of rule in the age of imperialism and the threat of proletarian revolution."²¹

In this first period, some common features of social democratic views of fascism can be recognized: [401]

1. The common ground from which right-wing and left-wing social democrats developed their views on fascism was anti-communism. The statement that fascism was the counter-revolution's response to the October Revolution and the strengthening of the communist movement was given an anti-communist edge by equating fascism and Bolshevism. This position, on which the doctrine of totalitarianism was based, remained a constant feature of right-wing social democratic views of fascism, while left-wing forces began to move away from it after 1933.

¹⁸ Walter Pahl, *Der italienische Faschismus und der internationale Sozialismus*, in: *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, June 14, 1928, S. 491.

¹⁹ Forward, from 15.10.1927.

²⁰ Pahl, p. 491 ff.

²¹ Siegfried Marck, *Liberalism, Fascism, Socialism*, in: *Der Klassenkampf*, 12/1928, p. 375 f.

2. In the early years - until about 1924/25 - the right agreed with the left that fascism was promoted by sections of the ruling class, especially heavy industry and the big agrarians, as a fighting force against the labor movement.
3. Despite this observation, the right and left were prevented from revealing the lawful connection between the rule of finance capital and fascism by the thesis that fascism in power in Italy was a Bonapartist dictatorship over both the working class and the bourgeoisie, including those sections that were among its supporters. Applying the opportunist conception of the state, it was deduced that the main goal of any anti-fascist policy must be to pave the way for the fascists to gain state power through coalition with bourgeois parties.
4. The decisive criterion for determining the class character of fascism for both the right and the left was the social composition of fascism's mass base. Accordingly, fascism was described as a movement of the petty bourgeoisie and declassed people from all classes and strata who had established their Bonapartist dictatorship over society as a whole. This "Bonapartism theory" became increasingly prominent in the second half of the 1920s
5. It was only from 1929 onwards - mainly on the left wing - when the Bonapartism thesis was modified, that voices were raised that increasingly emphatically explained the class character of fascism from its increasingly clear role as the custodian of the reactionary circles of big capital.

The outbreak of the world economic crisis and the growing fascist danger did not lead to a theoretical deepening of the social-democratic analysis of fascism in the direction taken by Marck, for example, although it was already quite obvious that fundamental statements of the right-wing social-democratic understanding of fascism had become more than questionable. However, the right-wing leaders insisted that these radical right-wing movements were like rivulets that sluggishly crept along in normal times. "But when the weather is bad, they turn into raging torrents that sweep away all kinds of debris and garbage." However, they were never able to cause lasting damage.²² One should not be intimidated by the spectre of fascism, wrote the influential social democratic publicist and theorist Georg Decker.²³

Despite all the facts, the [402] defeat of the Nazi movement was repeatedly prophesied right into January 1933. The SPD leadership went to the limit of what was reasonable for Social Democratic supporters and voters, namely to the point of being prepared to govern against parliament with Article 48 in order to save the coalition government under SPD Chancellor Hermann Müller by making concessions to the upper middle-class parties. While the left-wing forces in the SPD regarded this tactic as proof of the "closeness of the fascist regime"²⁴, the right-wing party leadership was as diligent as it was futile in its efforts to make itself indispensable to the ruling class as a "doctor at the bedside of capitalism" and in this way prevent decisive sections of the financial bourgeoisie from turning to the fascist dictatorship.

During the relative stabilization of capitalism, the reformists had denied the possibility of a serious danger of fascism by claiming that "eternal prosperity" had been achieved thanks to "organized capitalism" and "economic democracy". When the crisis that was due broke out and large sections of the petty bourgeoisie turned to fascism in its wake, this was used by the opportunists to declare the world economic crisis to be the main cause of the growing fascist danger and to relegate the connection between the imperialist bourgeoisie's striving to eliminate the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazi movement to a fact of secondary or tertiary importance.

²² Forward, from 27.10.1929.

²³ Georg Decker, *Der Kampf um die Demokratie*, in: *Die Gesellschaft*, 4/1929, p. 313.

²⁴ Max Seydewitz, *Threat with Article 48*, in: *Der Klassenkampf*, 6/1930, p. 161.

The escalation of the crisis and the progress made by the KPD in its efforts to establish anti-fascist unity of action between Communists and Social Democrats, which was particularly noticeable after the publication of its "Program Declaration on National and Social Liberation", increased the dilemma of Social Democratic tactics. It consisted in the fact that, on the one hand, the SPD leadership tried to contain the effect of the KPD's anti-fascist united front policy on its own supporters through verbal radicalism and displays of anti-fascist fighting determination (Iron Front), while on the other hand it was forced to push its policy of toleration ever further in order to remain an acceptable partner for the "moderate" wing of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

The open toleration policy towards the Brüning government (until July 1930) and the subsequent disguised toleration policy had two effects on the right-wing Social Democratic image of fascism: firstly, the totalitarianism component of the right-wing Social Democratic image of fascism was brutally reinforced. The equation of fascism and communism, taken to excess by Karl Kautsky in his "exhortation" for the election on September 14, 1930²⁵, remained the decisive justification for the rejection of unity against fascism right into February 1933. Secondly, during the Brüning period, the fascist threat was suddenly invoked in all its greatness and with strong words in order to make the "policy of the lesser evil" appear all the more plausible against this background; because now, as the speaker of the Social Democratic parliamentary group in the Reichstag declared on July 15, 1930, the "Seriousness of the situation ... squeamish considerations of tactics are out of place".²⁶

Under the dominance of the equation [403] of fascism and communism that fits the democracy. Dictatorship scheme [403] of fascism and communism, isolated attempts to arrive at a more correct assessment of the class character of fascism remained in the realm of theoretical discussion, which had lost none of its heterogeneity and uncertainty. At the beginning of the second half of 1931, Decker noted a great lack of clarity regarding the phenomenon of fascism: "While one sees German fascism only as a fairly exact imitation of the Italian fascist movement, the other sees fascism in every kind of occupational ideology, the third in the striving for a decidedly capitalist dictatorship and the fourth in every anti-democratic current in general."²⁷

However, as the assessments of the fascist movement continued to serve as an apologetic justification for the policy of toleration, the analysis of fascism remained blurred and flawed. Even correct partial insights of individual leading social democrats had no influence on policy, which continued to be characterized by the idea of overcoming the economic crisis as quickly as possible and returning the capitalist economic system to "normal functioning".

"The swastika movement," wrote the "Vorwärts" on 3 December 1931, "faces the fate that all movements of a middle class radicalized by economic crises have had so far: Disappointment and disintegration. If we succeed in holding the dam until the storm tide begins to ebb, everything will be won."²⁸

At the 1931 Leipzig Party Congress, Alexander Schiffrin, Eduard Heimann, Ernst Heilmann and also Rudolf Breitscheid stuck to the interpretations of fascism of the 1920s, according to which "Bolshevism and fascism were ... were brothers" (according to party chairman Otto Wels)²⁹ and National Socialism, a "plebeian counter-revolution", the "last reserve of the counter-revolution par excellence" (Schiffrin)³⁰. A shift in emphasis compared to the interpretations of fascism of the early 1920s was contained in Georg Decker's attempt at a definition, who, in an effort to declare the social democrats and bourgeois democracy to be the actual and main opponents of fascism instead of the communists and communism, stated: "Firstly, fascism is not a

²⁵ Forward, from 12.9.1930.

²⁶ Wilhelm Keil, *Erlebnisse eines Sozialdemokraten*, vol. 2, Stuttgart 1947, p. 391.

²⁷ See *Die Gesellschaft*, 6/1931, p. 482.

²⁸ Forward, from 3.12.1931.

²⁹ Social Democratic Party Congress Leipzig 1931. Minutes, Berlin 1931, p. 19.

³⁰ See Alexander Schiffrin, *Wandlungen des Abwehrkampfes*, in: *Die Gesellschaft*, 5/1931, p. 416.

direct reaction to the revolutionary upheaval, not a counter-revolution ...' but a reaction against democracy in the midst of democratic development. Secondly, fascism is directed simultaneously against democracy and against the independent workers' movement, and is therefore a reaction against the rise of the working class. Thirdly, fascism strives for a transformation of the form of the state ... And fourthly, fascism is combined with intensive mass activity, which gives a corresponding political direction its special fascist character."³¹

Rudolf Hilferding, once an important Marxist theorist, gave an assessment of fascism in early 1932 that was as shallow as it was disorienting, with which he came close to the psychologizing Hendrik de Man³²; he wrote that "carriers of this (the National Socialist - H. N.) movement ... were all the declassed", who "through nationalism ... and by that deep social aversion to the working class that is characteristic of Germany".³³ More realistic statements from the days of the Harzburg Front were consigned to oblivion when it was stated in the "Vorwärts" that this coalition of high finance, junketry and militarism with Hitlerite fascism was a class front that was concerned with "the supremacy of the upper middle classes in state and society",³⁴ and that fascism was "the class rule of the upper middle classes in its most brutal form".³⁵

The intensification of the political situation caused the two class lines to emerge more sharply in the Social Democratic interpretations of fascism. While the SPD leadership vacillated in its stance on fascism between the requirements of its demagogic anti-fascist agenda and the opportunistic standstill policy of its short-sighted political pragmatism, a nationalist group of younger intellectuals - mostly former volunteers and officers of the First World War - formed on the right wing around the "Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus" (New Leaves for Socialism), which considered an alliance with the fascist Strasser group out of its sympathy for fascism.

At the same time, however, the left-wing Social Democrats were becoming increasingly clear about the class character of fascism. Influenced by the communist analyses, the left opposition at the 1931 Leipzig Party Congress had introduced a definition in a resolution on Breitscheid's speech, the core sentence of which was: "German National Socialism is determined by monopoly capitalism in a country with a feudal capitalist tradition, in which fascism is the weapon of the ruling monopoly capitalism against the working class."³⁶

The left-wing forces had thus in principle correctly and clearly defined the class character of fascism and had begun to move away from the Bonapartist thesis, which had long prevailed among left-wing social democrats.³⁷

But neither these insights of the left nor their own partial findings, which would have been sufficient for a more realistic strategy of anti-fascist struggle, were taken to heart by the SPD leadership. Every initiative in the party and in the Social Democratic youth organizations to organize themselves for an effective extra-parliamentary defence against the Nazis and to join forces with the Communists was dealt with harshly and consistently.

At the turn of the year 1932/33, the trivialization of the fascist danger reached its peak. People celebrated the illusionary successes of their own supposed political cunning. "In high finance, heavy industry and large estates, Hitlerism had already been a success for some time.

³¹ Die Gesellschaft, 6/1931, p. 485 f.

³² See note 14.

³³ Rudolf Hilferding, Under the Threat of Fascism, in: Die Gesellschaft, 1/1932, p. 8 f.

³⁴ Forward, from 11.10.1931.

³⁵ Ibid., from 18.11.1931.

³⁶ The outcome of the Leipzig Party Congress, in: Der Klassenkampf, special issue 1931, p. 29.

³⁷ However, the Bonapartism theory became dominant again in the Socialist Workers' Party (SAP), which split from the SPD in 1931, under the influence of former functionaries of the KPO (Communist Party - Opposition) who joined this party.

has run its course," wrote the "Vorwärts" on January 1, 1933. Hilferding celebrated the policy of toleration with words devoid of any glimmer of a correct assessment of fascism: "The fascist movement in Germany has been kept out of state power, the seizure of which seemed so imminent, [405] thanks to the tactics of the Social Democrats, whose policy of toleration prevented the bourgeoisie from uniting into a reactionary mass under fascist leadership and prevented the fascists from entering the government during the rise."³⁸

This deception was far too comforting for opportunists and reformists not to be eagerly and believably seized upon. The consistent anti-communism in the attitude towards the KPD - which was still considered to be no less of a danger than the Nazis - also seemed justified by such a success. Hilferding wrote in a letter to Kautsky on December 1, 1932:

"The situation is, of course, very unpleasant, the fascist danger still looms, and the growth of the Communists worries our people all the more, since further progress in this direction would actually bring the danger that the attraction of the Communists would increase greatly as soon as they outnumbered us."³⁹

So it is hardly surprising that the profound turning point of January 30, 1933 was reflected only in the feeble verbal statement in the appeal of the party executive and the Reichstag faction that the Harzburg Front had risen again in the Hitler-Papen-Hugenberg cabinet. "The enemies of the working class, who until a few days ago were fiercely opposed to each other, have united in a common struggle against the working class, in a reactionary large-scale capitalist and large-scale agrarian concentration."⁴⁰ But since the seizure of power took place under the flimsy guise of the constitution, the Hitler government was certified as a "legitimate" right-wing government instead of sounding the alarm and recalling those labels of fascism in social democratic analyses in which it had been characterized as reactionary, anti-democratic, anti-parliamentary, terrorist and dictatorial.

Like July 20, 1932 - the Papen coup d'état in Prussia - January 30, 1933 also revealed that it was not the loudly proclaimed goals of "Socialist Action" or the formally correct partial insights of left-wing forces into fascism that determined the party executive's policy. January 1933 also revealed that it was not the loudly proclaimed goals of "Socialist Action" or the formally correct partial findings of left-wing forces about fascism that determined the policy of the party executive, but the concern that an anti-fascist mass movement with the participation of a strong communist party could slip out of the control of opportunism and advance beyond the defense of bourgeois Weimar democracy to the fight for an expansion of democracy.

The constant trivialization of the fascist danger worked in the same direction. By doing so, the party leadership inhibited the willingness of social democratic workers to heed the communist call to form an anti-fascist united front and secured the allegiance of the masses of members despite their growing dissatisfaction with the leaders' standstill policy.

The anti-fascist power of the Social Democrats and the trade unions led by them, as well as the anti-Nazi stance of the majority of leading Social Democrats, did not come to fruition because their anti-communism was even stronger than their anti-fascism and because they were not prepared to fight fascism along with its motherland, the imperialist system of rule and economy.

[406] The victory of fascism proved the complete bankruptcy of right-wing social-democratic politics and ideology, and especially of right-wing social-democratic conceptions of fascism. Even now, however, the representatives of the bourgeois class line in the SPD proved neither able nor willing to draw the consequences from this and to undertake a serious analysis of fascism and the causes of its victory. This is evidenced by various documents from the first months after January 30, 1933, of which only two should be mentioned here, namely a letter

³⁸ Rudolf Hilferding, Zwischen den Entscheidungen, in: Die Gesellschaft, 1/1933, p. 8.

³⁹ International Institute of Social History, (hereafter: IISG), Amsterdam, Karl Kautsky Estate.

⁴⁰ Vorwärts, dated January 31, 1933 (morning edition).

Rudolf Hilferding's letter to Karl Kautsky from April 13, 1933 and an appeal from the SPD's emigration committee (SOPADE) from June 1933.

Hilferding's letter is particularly revealing because it exposes the deepest reason for the suicidal policy of the right-wing Social Democrats, namely the fact that their hatred of communism and their fear of the proletarian revolution were even greater than their opposition to and fear of fascism. Hilferding wrote to Kautsky: "Like you, I have always seen in Bolshevism and its repercussions the greatest danger and in the Bolshevik seizure of power a counter-revolutionary fact for the rest of the world, and how right we have been."⁴¹ In the same letter Hilferding wrote that the second act of the fascist seizure of power had begun: "In it fascism will stabilize its autocracy. It has not only seized state power, but also the economic organization. First of all the bourgeois organization. The entire organizational apparatus, so strongly developed in Germany, is placed under the leadership of the National Socialist Party." As you can see, there was not the slightest remnant of Marxism left in Hilferding. His view of fascism was that of a citizen torn from his liberal pipe dreams.

The aforementioned SOPADE appeal "Break the chains" assumed that the reactionary big capitalists and big agrarians had inflicted a serious defeat on the working class through the Nazi party and that the economic crisis had helped them to lead all declassed people into rebellion against the state and to conquer it. Democracy had been replaced by despotism, which ruthlessly oppressed everyone, "even the bourgeois parties, even those who had been foolish enough to help it to power".⁴²

This eclectic mixture of the most diverse elements of social democratic views of fascism culminated in excessive anti-communism, in which the KPD was slandered with the claim that it not only had no interest in defending democracy, but had also "made common cause with the enemies of popular freedom"; communism had been "a single crime against the German working class and a terrible disaster for it." It had "paralysed the parliamentary influence of the workers' movement, ... made the struggle for the unorganized and indifferent more difficult, weakened the trade unions and facilitated the game of reaction."

However, the emigration committee was finally forced to take the pressure from left-wing forces into account, which was reflected in the Prague Manifesto of January 1934.⁴³ Although this document also lacked a thorough analysis of the class character of fascism,⁴⁴ concessions to the left-wing opposition were visible in various [407] statements in the document. The establishment of the fascist dictatorship was described as the "victory of the total state", a state that served the interests of big business.

In the period that followed, there were a number of statements by various prominent Social Democrats on the problem of fascism,⁴⁵ but the party executive placed its hopes in the renewed involvement of the Social Democrats in any form of toleration or even coalition policy on the part of the Reichswehr generals and former coalition partners; it was therefore not interested in exposing the class foundations of the Hitler regime.

Meanwhile, fascism in power led to a rapidly deepening divergence between right-wing and left-wing social democratic views of fascism. The real experiences and

⁴¹ IISG, Amsterdam, Karl Kautsky estate.

⁴² Neuer Vorwärts, 18.6.1933. The following quotations in: *ibid.*

⁴³ Dieter Lange, Das Prager Manifest von 1934, in: *ZfG*, 7/1972, p. 843 ff.; Heinz Niemann, Zur Vorgeschichte und Wirkung des Prager Manifestes der SPD, in: *ZfG*, 8/1965, p. 1355 ff.

⁴⁴ Hilferding considered it superfluous "to analyze the nature of fascism again in detail and to make confessions of regret" (letter from Rudolf Hilferding to Curt Geyer dated 11.1.1934, in: *Mit dem Gesicht nach Deutschland*, Düsseldorf 1968, p. 214).

⁴⁵ See Erich Matthias, Sozialdemokratie und Nation. Ein Beitrag zur Ideengeschichte der sozialdemokratischen Emigration in der Prager Zeit des Parteivorstandes 1933-1938, St 1952, p. 87 ff.

the maturing analysis of fascism by the Communist International exerted a positive influence on left-wing social democratic efforts to create a realistic image of fascism and on the position of the left on the anti-fascist united front.

Initially, views on the large-scale capitalist character of fascism were not only expressed in "Sozialistische Aktion", edited by Paul Hertz⁴⁶, but even occasionally in "Neuer Vorwärts"⁴⁷, which, however, very early on was primarily responsible for spreading the "Bonapartis must theory"⁴⁸ and for portraying the fascist dictatorship as the "despotism of Hitler".⁴⁹

The right-wing Social Democratic views on fascism were reflected both in fundamental documents such as the SOPADE appeals "For Germany - against Hitler" of January 30, 1936 and "To the German people" on the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939, as well as in articles, documents and speeches by leading SOPADE representatives such as Hilferding and Geyer, Stampfer, Tarnow and Riepekohl.

The SOPADE appeal of January 1936 was calculated to counter the effect of the analyses and resolutions of the Brussels conference of the KPD by harshly distancing itself from the Communists and emphasizing its own resolute opposition to the Nazis. It was correctly stated that Hitler was wielding the whip for big business, but demands for its elimination as the basis of fascism were omitted. Every tactical difference in the camp of the monopoly bourgeoisie was interpreted as proof of their progressive turning away from the Hitler regime.⁵⁰

The denial of the imperialist class character of fascism was complemented by the deliberate downplaying of the role of the working class in the anti-fascist struggle. This line culminated in 1939 in the concept elaborated by Hilferding and Geyer, which was published under the heading "Party of Freedom" was published. Hilferding presented this concept for the first time at the meeting of the SAI executive from January 14 to 16, 1939, at which the "fight for democracy" was discussed.

Hilferding stated that a completely new situation had arisen since the "demise of all freedom east of the Rhine". Today it is no longer a question of fighting for socialism, but of fighting for the ideas of the West, "for our entire culture, it is no longer a question of class antagonism in the old sense, but for this struggle everything that is accessible in the ideas of freedom and civilization must be won. Socialism has thus moved into second place."⁵¹ He claimed that what he called the "tragedy of the workers' movement" had begun in 1917 with the victory of the Bolsheviks. "Bolshevism has made the opposition between socialism and democracy a principle. Therefore, in our view, a general commitment to democracy is not enough, but the sharpest demarcation from the proletarian dictatorship is necessary." Freedom and democracy are "something absolute. That is why a purification of attitudes towards democracy is necessary ... It is more important to preserve freedom than to achieve anything (including socialism)."

At the end of his lecture, Hilferding defined fascism "as the subjugation of the whole of society to a state apparatus that has become a power in itself and must constantly expand this power if it does not want to perish; therefore its will to attack also springs from its inner nature and law."

⁴⁶ Socialist Action, January 1936 ("Hitler without backers").

⁴⁷ Neuer Vorwärts, April 1, 1934 ("Who dictates to the dictator? The class character of brown rule").

⁴⁸ For example, on November 26, 1933, the Neue Vorwärts published a supplement entitled "Lehren der Geschichte. Adolf Hitler - Louis Bonaparte" on a whole printed page with excerpts from Karl Marx's "18th Brumaire", which were introduced with the sentence: "This work, written in 1852, reads in places like a description of present-day Germany."

⁴⁹ See *ibid.*, dated 6.8.1933.

⁵⁰ SOPADE report on Germany, September 1937, p. 13; Neuer Vorwärts, February 13, 1938.

⁵¹ For this and the following quotations: IISG, Amsterdam, SAI-Fonds, No. 547; record of the meeting for the members of the Austrian Socialists' foreign representation (authored by O. P., i.e. presumably Oscar Pollak).

To substantiate his claim that the labour movement was completely incapable of successfully fighting fascism, Hilferding concluded: "Our epoch is characterized by the primacy of foreign policy; but foreign policy is power politics and can therefore only be successfully conducted by governments." The labor movement was unsuited to this, it was in keeping with its historical nature "that the forty-hour week was more important to it than the Spanish question". The decisive opposition "runs through all classes: on the one side the camp of those who want to defend freedom and culture - on the other side fascism".

The reporter O. P. added his own brief commentary to his rendition of Hilferding's remarks, writing that this view "leads straight to the self-dissolution of socialism: in this picture it is neither the deployment of the struggle nor an effective force, it has to step back - but who should the working class let act in its place, in the place of independent and purposeful politics of its own? The bourgeois governments and the camp of 'freedom'!" He concluded quite rightly: "That is the program of the complete abdication of the socialist idea and movement, the most disdainful liquidationism!" There is nothing to add to this.

In the manifesto "Party of Freedom"⁵², which appeared shortly afterwards, Curt Geyer combined this concept with open polemics against all left-wing social democratic[409] groups that professed the goal of a revolutionary-Marxist rebirth of German social democracy. In this paper, the opposition between the "liberal-democratic" world on the one hand and fascism-communism on the other was derived from the opposition between democracy and dictatorship constructed by opportunism. One of the decisive theses was: "Germany under the rule of National Socialism is no longer a class state in the sense of Marxist theory. There is no class that could be defined according to the scheme of Marxist class theory."⁵³ That is why "the anti-fascist struggle ... is not a class struggle, and the ideas that support it are not born of class position and class interest, but are eternal because they are linked to the true essence of man as a spiritual being".

What Geyer and Hilferding proclaimed as the final, irrefutable truth, namely the elimination of the classes and the class struggle through fascism, was further propagated by Stampfer in the "Neues Vorwärts" in the form of a question: "Was it really the bourgeoisie that helped Hitler to power, and is it the bourgeoisie that benefits from his regime?"⁵⁴

Theoretically less ambitious than Hilferding and Geyer, but extremely clear in its practical political conclusions, was an elaboration by Wilhelm Riepeckohl, backed by Fritz Tarnow; it was presented to a conference of leading Social Democratic emigrants in Copenhagen on April 8, 1940 for discussion.⁵⁵ In it, Riepeckohl pinned his hopes on those circles of the monopoly bourgeoisie who were in favor of a common battle front of all imperialist states against the Soviet Union and would therefore get rid of Hitler and his regime at the appropriate time. In the ensuing order, socio-economic upheavals were to be avoided and Nazis and Communists were to be excluded from political life in equal measure.

⁵² For a detailed analysis, see Heinz Niemann, *Wesen und Entwicklung der rechtssozialdemokratischen Sozialismusauffassung (1921-1939). Ein ideologiegeschichtlicher Beitrag zur Genesis des "demokratischen Sozialismus"*, phil. Diss. (B), Leipzig 1973, (Ms), p. 134 ff.

⁵³ Curt Geyer, *Die Partei der Freiheit*, Paris 1939, p. 13 - The previously proven fact that SOPADE only published this paper under Geyer's name for tactical reasons can now be supplemented by the fact that its actual spiritual father was Hilferding. In a letter from Paul Hertz to Karl Frank dated October 20, 1939, it says: "I met Rudolf Hilferding a few days ago ... I finally led on to this subject by saying that if we are going to talk about books, let us also talk about Geyer's writing. It confirms what I have always said: the intellectual author of this writing is not C. G., but R. H. If I had written it, it would have become much clearer" (IISG, Amsterdam, Estate of Paul Hertz, Folder X).

⁵⁴ *Neuer Vorwärts*, from May 25, 1939.

⁵⁵ See Dieter Lange, *SPD und Hitlerfaschismus. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie nach Ausbruch des zweiten Weltkrieges (September 1939 bis Juni 1941)*, phil. Diss., Berlin 1965, (Ms), p. 85 ff.

The right-wing forces of German Social Democracy held on to this attitude in their hearts until the end of the war, even after the invasion of the Soviet Union. However, in view of the fundamentally new political constellation after June 22, 1941 and the incessantly growing sympathy of the people for the Red Army and the Soviet Union, they had to refrain from giving free rein to their extreme anti-communism, at least outwardly. This conception also lost some of its influence because its most prominent representatives, Hilferding and Geyer, left the ranks of SOPADE - Hilferding by his [410] murder in a Gestapo prison in Paris in February 1941, Geyer by resigning from the national group of German Social Democrats in England. The third member of this group, Stampfer, went to the USA at the end of 1940, where he was relatively isolated from the Western European Social Democratic emigration.

The invasion of the Soviet Union was not only a monstrous crime against the peoples of the USSR, but also represented the most serious crime ever committed by fascist German imperialism against the German nation itself. In its appeal of June 24, 1941, the Central Committee of the KPD called on the German people to fight against this crime against the Soviet and their own people. "Our enemy is in our own country: the fascist landsknechts of the big capitalists, the war profiteers, are our enemy! The joint victory of the Red Army and the oppressed peoples fighting for their national freedom will also be the victory of our German people. The fate of our nation now lies in our hands, in the hands of the creative German people."⁵⁶ With the entry of the Soviet Union into the war, its character as an anti-fascist, national liberation war of the peoples became fully apparent. Its goal had to be the final and complete destruction of German and Italian fascism and militarism. The attitude to these questions and to the Soviet Union also proved the value and unworthiness of the theory of fascism advocated in each case.

The statements of the various social democratic groups on the invasion of the USSR reflected the entire political division of social democratic emigration. In the spring of 1941, representatives of left-wing socialist groups in English emigration - New Beginnings, the Socialist Workers' Party and the International Socialist League (ISK) - had taken the initiative to rally social democratic emigration. As a result of these efforts, the "Union of German Socialist Organizations in Great Britain" was founded in March 1941; Erich Ollenhauer and Hans Vogel had also joined it as representatives of the emigration committee SOPADE in order to avoid isolation. Against the resistance of these two⁵⁷ left-wing socialist forces had pushed through the following formulation in the Union's founding declaration: "The German socialists in Great Britain are united in the conviction that military defeat and the overthrow of the Hitler system, the final overthrow of German militarism and the elimination of the social foundations of Hitler's dictatorship are indispensable prerequisites for lasting peace, the reconstruction of Europe and a democratic and socialist future for Germany."⁵⁸

The unification of social democratic emigration in England achieved with the founding of the Union proved to be fragile just a few months later, when it was seriously tested for the first time. When, after June 22, 1941, the Union's attitude to the Soviet state had to be determined, the differences between SOPADE and the left-wing socialist groups, which had only been bridged with great difficulty, prevented a joint declaration from being issued. In the spirit of the then arch-reactionary American senator and later US President Truman, SOPADE in London proclaimed⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Die Welt (Stockholm), 11.7.1941, p. 886; see also Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, vol. 5, Berlin 1966, p. 289 ff.

⁵⁷ See Werner Röder, Die deutschen sozialistischen Exilgruppen in Großbritannien 1940-1945, Hanover 1969, p. 95 f.

⁵⁸ See On the Politics of German Socialists. Political rallies and programmatic guidelines of the Union of German Socialist Organizations in Great Britain 1941-45, London 1945, p. 26.

⁵⁹ The then Senator H. Truman had declared in June 1941: "If we see that Germany is winning, we should help Russia, and if Russia is winning, we should help Germany and in this way let as many as possible kill each other" (New York Times, June 24, 1941).

The British and American democracies could become the dominant factor in the political reorganization of the world. If they exhaust themselves in long battles, then the power of British and American democracy can become the dominant factor in the political reorganization of the world."⁶⁰

In contrast to this pro-imperialist position of SOPADE, the representatives of the left-wing groups declared their solidarity with the Soviet Union. At a general meeting on June 28, 1941, the London SAP members unanimously declared: "In this struggle, we are fully and unconditionally on the side of the Soviet Union, which still represents the October Revolution in the minds and hearts of the millions of workers and oppressed under Nazi fascism."⁶¹

New Beginnings and even the ISK took a similar stance; the latter was in favor of an alliance between England and the Soviet Union. The foreign office of Neu Beginnen published a memorandum entitled "Clear fronts! The German Socialists and Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union" on August 20, 1941. In contrast to the right-wing leaders, the Neu Beginnen foreign office's memorandum, despite its ambivalence, was the first serious attempt to deal objectively with the changed war situation since June 22, 1941. With this memorandum, written largely by Richard Löwenthal⁶², the Auslandsbüro Neu Beginnen placed itself from the outset on the ground of the emerging anti-Hitler coalition and accordingly largely turned away from anti-communist views, which it had actively supported until then.

However, Neu Beginnen took the false view that the invasion of Hitler's Germany had forced the Soviet Union to return to the "anti-fascist world front", from which it had withdrawn in the summer of 1939 in the interests of its own security. Contrary to their own earlier assertions, however, the authors felt it necessary to point out that the Soviet Union's measures to secure its western borders in 1939 and 1940 had nothing to do "with that ideological bloc or that alleged desire for conquest on the part of Hitler's Germany".

'red imperialism' ... which has often been attributed to it ... It is particularly necessary today to liquidate the latter expression and to understand that it carried out the limited annexations in that phase for security reasons, and has nothing in common with the unlimited expansionism for which all economic preconditions are lacking in Russia."⁶³

While the London party executive group and the right-wing social-democratic "German Labor Delegation" formed in the USA in 1938 continued to stubbornly adhere to their militantly anti-communist positions, Neu Beginnen expressed sympathy for the undaunted resistance of the Soviet people. While largely rejecting the doctrine of totalitarianism, the authors of the memorandum emphasized that the determination of the Soviet people was not accidental, but had its political and economic basis in the Soviet order, which was free of capitalist exploitation and oppression. Since most right-wing social democrats viewed the socialist social order of the USSR only through the lens of the "unbridgeable" opposition between the dictatorship of the proletariat and democracy, which they had artificially constructed, Neu Beginnen's statement about the Soviet Union, regardless of its tactical function, took on a very special significance: "In the test of fire, the Soviet Union shows what these achievements of revolution and construction mean for its workers and peasants. It thus proves that its dictatorial regime is not the expression of a reactionary social development, not a tool for suppressing the rising forces in society, but the expression of the special difficulties and sacrifices under the conditions of Russian isolation. And it thus vividly refutes the one-sidedness of those so-

⁶⁰ Sozialistische Mitteilungen, 27/1941, p. 1.

⁶¹ Information letter from the London office of the SAP local group to its members in England, 1/1941.

⁶² Verbal information from Richard Löwenthal to the author.

⁶³ The Left News, p. 1870.

cialists who see only dictatorship in Russia and forget the social content of Russian development."⁶⁴

The Battle of Moscow, the formation of the anti-Hitler coalition, the upswing in the anti-fascist liberation struggle of the oppressed and attacked peoples - these and other factors also brought about a change in the political climate in social democratic emigration. The London SOPADE group dealt with this situation at its first national conference on November 7 and 8, 1942 at the Austrian Labour Club House in London.⁶⁵ Vogel's and Ollenhauer's speeches⁶⁶ reflected, at least in part, the real changes in the course of the war as a result of the heroic battles of the Red Army, without, however, changing anything in their pro-Western orientation. It was important to adhere to the thesis that Hitler could only be overthrown as a result of the military victory of the Allies, i.e. not by their own efforts or with a significant contribution from the German anti-fascist movement.

Vogel was forced to deal explicitly with the relationship to the KPD, since even within the SOPADE group some members, who gathered around Victor Schiff, demanded the establishment of an objective alliance with the KPD. However, Vogel rejected this with the explanation that an understanding with the KPD would mean that the future German workers' movement would have to renounce all independence "and submit to the command of Russia and the Communist International".⁶⁷

With this stance, the SOPADE group devalued its commitment to the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and truly democratic reorganization of Germany without militarism and imperialism, which largely coincided with the policy of the KPD, as Ollenhauer stated:

"There is a world of experience and knowledge for us between 1918 and today. There is no going back to November 1918 and the Republic of Weimar. Today we know: It is important for the working class to fight for political power, but it is even more important to assert it and use it purposefully."⁶⁸

The demands to overthrow Hitler's fascism along with its backers, the masters of the economy, to establish a firm democratic state power led by the working class and to pursue a peaceful foreign policy were also the basis, in a general and weakened form, of the guidelines of the Union "For the New German Republic" of October 13, 1943.⁶⁹

In the last phase of the war, when it was finally clear that the Soviet Union would have a decisive influence on Germany's post-war organization, the right-wing forces demagogically used the correct statements about fascism and the measures necessary to eradicate it in the service of preparing an anti-communist-oriented re-foundation of the SPD. Ollenhauer had already declared at the end of 1942 that the discussion about the future action program of this party could be "of great, perhaps decisive importance for the first actions and for the future direction of this new movement".⁷⁰

Based on political and tactical considerations, a strategic objective was formulated that was intended to torpedo the alliance with the KPD and ignored its own insights into the class character and socio-economic roots of fascism, as well as avoiding an exact analysis of the objectively anti-fascist class forces.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 1872.

⁶⁵ Ollenhauer spoke at an evening event to mark the anniversary of the November Revolution as part of the side program of the national conference. Guests included the former president of the SAI, Louis de Brouckère, the general secretary of the Labor Party, J. S. Middleton, as well as representatives of New Beginnings, the SAP and the ISK.

⁶⁶ See Conference of German Democrats in England, London 1942.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

⁶⁹ See For the new German Republic. Guidelines of the Union of October 13, 1943; On the International Policy of German Socialists. Declaration of the Union of October 23, 1943, in: Sozialistische Mitteilungen, 55-56/1943, p. 1 f.

⁷⁰ Erich Ollenhauer, Möglichkeiten und Aufgaben einer geeinten sozialistischen Partei in Deutschland, London 1943, p. 3.

The path of the new supposedly "militant democracy", which was to be represented by a parliamentary body, would, Ollenhauer explained, lead to the planned and purposeful construction of a socialist order through the practical cooperation and involvement of the broadest sections of the population. The new party was to be led "as a socialist people's party", open to all political, ideological and religious forces that were committed to its goals and policies.⁷¹

The SOPADE concept aimed to counter the real, scientific strategy and tactics developed by the KPD with an attractive, mass-politically effective social democratic alternative that would provide a basis for the unification of all left-wing forces without and against the KPD.

In contrast to the German social democratic emigration in England, the consistently anti-fascist left-wing social democrats in Switzerland were able to assert their views much more strongly. Their image of fascism gradually led them to accept the policy of the National Committee Free Germany (NKFD) as the only correct, national and at the same time revolutionary policy of the working class in the fight against fascism.

The failure of the July 20, 1944 conspiracy and the execution of the leading Social Democrats involved, including those who - like Leber and Reichwein - had sought to collaborate with the Communists,⁷² led to a considerable weakening of the revolutionary democratic line of illegal Social Democracy and its influence in the period of the reconstitution of the Social Democratic Party after May 1945. This meant that precisely those forces had lost some of their leading figures who, in contrast to Kurt Schumacher, were prepared and determined to break with the disastrous opportunist politics of the past, to find a new constructive relationship with the KPD and to unite all anti-fascist forces on the basis of their own experience in active illegal resistance.

After the victory over fascism, it was only the central committee of the SPD under Otto Grotewohl and Max Fechner, as the representative of the proletarian-revolutionary class line, that spoke out in favor of an anti-fascist-democratic Germany in the founding call of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. He alone also correctly answered the core question of a scientific definition of fascism, the question of its class character, and drew the necessary conclusions from this: Unity of action of the working class and disempowerment of fascist monopoly capital.

History has judged the policies of the other groups, including those of left-wing social democrats like Neu Beginnen, who hoped to carry out a democratic revolution without and against the communists; who did not recognize and were not prepared to recognize that the struggle against fascism and for democracy leads to socialism with historically compelling necessity and requires a united front with the communists.

The newly formed Social Democracy did not have a unified post-war concept. The opportunist forces carried out the reconstitution under political-propagandistic principles whose pragmatic function was directed towards the re-emergence of the Weimar SPD, the demarcation from communism and the securing of its mass influence with demagogic socialist phrases. The proletarian class forces turned to unity with the Communists and their mature anti-fascist-democratic program for the eradication of Nazism and the reconstruction of a truly democratic Germany with all rights and freedoms for the people. Their own left-wing traditions, their programmatic-theoretical insights, including those concerning fascism, made it easier for the class-conscious social democrats to understand the communist strategy and tactics of the anti-fascist-democratic revolution and to make them their own.

⁷¹ See *ibid.*, p. 15, p. 17.

⁷² See *History of the German Labor Movement*, vol. 5, p. 413 f.

In conclusion, it can be stated that there can be no question of a unified social democratic theory of fascism in the sense that it applied to the communists' analysis of fascism. The range of social democratic analyses of fascism extends from the fascist-friendly statements of Walter Pahl to the bourgeois "middle class theory" and the Bonapartism theory to the social democratic left's views of fascism, which came very close to those of the communists. This pluralism of theories was an expression of the decomposition of opportunism and its inability to provide a valid answer to the urgent current questions of the workers' movement.

In accordance with Hilferding's statement that the right-wing leaders had always seen the greatest danger of all in Bolshevism, their attitude towards fascism was always subordinated to the anti-communist struggle. Their theory of fascism was not the guiding principle of an anti-fascist policy, but rather had the function of sophistically justifying a policy oriented towards the goal of restoring cooperation with the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Their demonstrably false views, which remained on the surface, were not due to a failure of theory in the face of the "phenomenon" of fascism, but resulted from their bourgeois class standpoint, which of course also became a decisive epistemological barrier.

The political failure of German Social Democracy in the struggle against the approaching fascism and against the Hitler dictatorship was only a side effect of its theoretical bankruptcy in the face of fascism at the level of ideology, but not its cause. The theoretical and practical political behavior of social democracy as part of the workers' movement in the face of fascism proves emphatically that there is a unity between revolutionary theory, method and scientific politics, the violation of which, by disregarding even one element, leads completely astray, to failure in the face of the objective requirements of the historical epoch.

The Social Democratic Party Executive's interpretations of fascism fully confirm that neither a theoretical analysis of fascism nor an appropriate strategy and tactics of the anti-fascist struggle can be worked out from the standpoint of taking sides for the bourgeois order and against real socialism.

[417]

Gerhard Lozek/Rolf Richter: On the examination of prevailing bourgeois schism theories*

The analysis of fascism occupies a prime position in international bourgeois historiography. Interest in this subject has increased significantly since the early 1960s, but especially in the 1970s.

The external picture shows an almost unmanageable number of publications covering a wide range of topics. Structuralist theories of fascism stand alongside socio-psychological and historical explanations of ideas. Biographical works on fascist leaders are exceptionally well represented. Bourgeois historians, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, economists and representatives of other disciplines have devoted themselves to the study of fascism in special editions of academic and other periodicals and at international fascism conferences and other historiographical meetings.¹

These activities are by no means accidental; they testify to an affinity with the problem of fascism, the cause of which ultimately lies in the political, economic and ideological processes of contemporary capitalist society, particularly in the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism.

On this basis, a specific political-ideological and theoretical situation of need developed for the political leaders² and also for the bourgeois theorists. It had the effect of increasing the compulsion to make a historical-political diagnosis of fascism and to disseminate a corresponding bourgeois view of history in its historical-concrete and political-universal-historical forms. At the same time, the positions of those scholars who turned to the analysis of fascism out of genuine democratic motives and a clear anti-fascist conviction cannot be overlooked.

[418] Following on from the work of Wolfgang Abendroth, the work of the Marburg academic Reinhard Kühnl in particular gained influence in international research on fascism and brought it to fruition. Kühnl's analyses provide anti-fascist forces with valuable impulses and clear-sighted insights into the emergence of fascism and the dangers posed by all its forms, not least neo-fascism in West Germany.³ In addition, the insights and considerations aimed at uniting all anti-fascist, democratic forces prove to be of great value.

In the worldwide conflict between socialism and imperialism, between progress and reaction, the interpretation of fascism forms a field of fierce ideological struggle. Bourgeois historiography, defending a social order that is historically on the defensive, has fundamentally placed fascism research in the service of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism.

In a narrower sense, the bourgeois historiography of fascism is characterized by two objectives: Firstly, to wash the capitalist system clean of the stigma of fascism, i.e. to portray fascist movements and above all fascist forms of rule as something of the "Western",

* The article written for this volume appeared in an expanded version under the title *Legende oder Rechtfertigung*, in: *Zur Kritik der bürgerlichen Ideologie*, ed. by M. Buhr, vol. 97.

¹ An impression is given by: *International Fascism 1920-1945*, German edition of the *Journal of Contemporary History*, ed. by Walter Laqueur and George L. Mosse, Munich 1966; *Theories of Fascism*, ed. by Ernst Nolte, Cologne/(West) Berlin 1967; *European Fascism*, ed. by S. J. Woolf, London 1968; *Native Fascism in the Successor States 1918-1945*, ed. by Peter Sugar, Santa Barbara 1971; *The Place of Fascism in Europe an. J. Woolf, London 1968*; *Native Fascism in the Successor States 1918-1945*, ed. by Peter F. Sugar, Santa Barbara 1971; *The Place of Fascism in Europe an History*, ed. by Gilbert Allardyce, Englewood Cliffs, N. J. 1971; *Gerhard Schulz, Fascism - Nationalism. Versions und theoretische Kontroversen 1922-1972*, Frankfurt a. M. /(West-)Berlin/Wien 1974; *Theories of Fascism*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, October 1976; *Richard Saage, Faschismustheorien*, Munich 1976.

² Franz Josef Strauß, *Fascism from the right and the left*, in: *Bayern-Kurier*, June 3, 1978.

³ The work of Reinhard Opitz should also be emphasized here. With some reservations, analyses by Manfred Clemen, Eike Hennig and Arno Klönne can also be included.

secondly, to examine the fascist movements, forms and methods of rule for their usefulness in stabilizing the capitalist system internally as well as for its expansive actions externally.

In this context, the tendency of bourgeois historians of capitalist states, especially the USA, the FRG, Italy and Great Britain, to coordinate their research on fascism and - especially in the debate with Marxist-Leninist and other democratic forces - to formulate common positions and to advocate conceptual guidelines of bourgeois representations of fascism more effectively on an international level is revealing.

An overview of the various conceptions of fascism reveals two basic lines that are interlinked: On the one hand, an openly reactionary politicization is discernible in the bourgeois discussion of fascism, which is most clearly expressed in a number of depictions of the so-called Hitler wave. In these and in discussions about terrorism, the bourgeois interpretation of fascism often reaches the stage of openly rehabilitating fascism, its leaders, parts of the fascist power apparatus or individual aspects of politics. On the other hand, there is a strong tendency to deal with the representation of fascism with a greater degree of flexibility. Typical of these efforts is operating with partial truths about the establishment of the fascist dictatorship. Ernst Nolte's assertion that the idea of the essential connection between fascism and capitalism had become "common property" also belongs in this context.⁴ Of course, this says nothing about *how* these relationships are interpreted.

In the 1970s, the anti-communist basic trait of bourgeois fascism theories was clearly reinforced and consolidated in the form of the doctrine of totalitarianism, which, both in its undisguised, militantly anti-communist form and in modified forms, forms a decisive basis for interpretation and a political-ideological stereotype of the bourgeois view of fascism.

On the basis of the bourgeois "industrial society" doctrine, three *methodological* tendencies can be seen in more recent bourgeois theoretical discussions:

Firstly, the focus on the "social" and "economic" is further expanded, although the system-determining factors continue to be excluded. Drawing on relevant preliminary work that was already conceived decades ago, the relationships between the various "groups" and class forces of capitalist society and fascism are discussed in particular. The sometimes quite flexible approach is not able to conceal the fact that it is still determined by the old interests of bourgeois historiography: to absolve the imperialist power relations and especially the rule of monopoly capital of the main responsibility for the emergence of fascism, the establishment of fascist dictatorships and their policies or - since there are limits to a primitive denial of this fact - to keep their "share" in fascism extremely low.

Secondly, attempts to classify fascism in terms of world history and to question it with regard to its promoting and inhibiting effects on the development of "industrial society" became more and more common.

Thirdly, the bourgeois historiography of fascism is increasingly influenced by discussions about the usefulness of an overarching concept of fascism. This is not only supported by those influential voices that falsify fascism merely as a right-wing variant of "totalitarianism" (or terrorism) or construct left-wing and right-wing fascisms. Rather, clear advances have become visible in the form of doubting or denying the existence of general characteristics of fascism.

⁴ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, from July 10, 1976.

The abundance of bourgeois works on the problem of fascism cannot hide the fact that in the field of fascism theories the conceptual guidelines of historical analyses can be reduced to a few postulates, doctrines and theories.

On the one hand, they show the continuation of a history of theory spanning decades, in which traditional views championed by bourgeois historians since time immemorial have been preserved for class-related reasons and are repeated - albeit often modified - right up to the present day.

On the other hand, bourgeois historiography is forced to process newly produced concepts of bourgeois ideology, such as the "modernization" theory. Ultimately, due to the differentiated political needs, the bourgeois conceptions of fascism neither present themselves as strictly separate theories nor as theories that simply replace each other. Rather, there is a complicated interweaving that can also be seen in the work of individual historians.

The attempts of bourgeois historians and social theorists to interpret fascism historically and theoretically have a history of more than 50 years. Despite extensive research and publications, which have grown by leaps and bounds in the last decade and provide a wealth of factual material, bourgeois and other non-Marxist historiography has not succeeded in achieving an exact definition of the nature of [420] fascism, its social causes and its place in world history. This is mainly due to the class-related inability to understand the character and position of fascism in the universal historical process as a specific phenomenon of the capitalist system in the phase of its general crisis.

Since the emergence of fascist movements in Italy and Germany after the First World War, bourgeois historiography and historicizing journalism - openly fascist and other pro-fascist representations will be excluded here - has gone through several stages that differed in terms of scientific theory and ideological and political thrust.

A *first stage* encompasses the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. Almost without exception, the bourgeois depictions of fascism in those years amounted to evaluating fascism as a specifically Italian phenomenon or one associated with the person of Mussolini. "Fascism is Mussolinism" was the common view.⁵ Even for those publications that considered fascist movements in other countries, Italian fascism was regarded as the general standard of evaluation. With arbitrary comparisons between Italian fascism and "Bolshevism" in Soviet Russia, the first beginnings of the later doctrine of totalitarianism also appeared.⁶ In the early 1920s, the leading Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer and later, at the beginning of the 1930s, August Thalheimer attempted to transfer Marx's mid-19th century characterization of French Bonapartism to the 20th century and fascism in an ahistorical manner. In addition, Wilhelm Reich's version of a misunderstood relationship between ecology and sexual psychology spread variants of an interpretation of fascism that invoked Marxism but in reality vulgarized it.⁷

A *second stage* understandably began in 1933 after the establishment of the fascist regime in Germany; it lasted until its destruction in 1945. The main interest of bourgeois fascism research shifted to Germany. Liberal social scientists and social reformist theorists who had emigrated from Germany gained particular influence. In

⁵ Hermann Heller, *Europa und der Faschismus*, Berlin/Leipzig 1929, p. 64.

⁶ See Francesco Nitti, *Bolschewismus, Fascismus und Demokratie*, Munich 1926; Erwin von Beckerath, *Fascismus und Bolschewismus*, in: *Volk und Reich der Deutschen*, Berlin 1929.

⁷ Otto Bauer, *Das Gleichgewicht der Klassenkräfte*, in: *Der Kampf*, 2/1924, p. 57 ff.; August Thalheimer, *Über den Faschismus*, in: *Gegen den Strom*, vol. 1930; Wilhelm Reich, *Massenpsychologie des Faschismus*, Copenhagen 1933.

In contrast to the previous stage, the assessment of fascism was now based on comparative aspects from the outset, not only with regard to a comparison with Italy and fascist movements in other countries, but in particular in comparative consideration of past or contemporary state power structures and forms of rule.

Two main conceptual directions emerged. While the first, in more or less realist reflection, took as its starting point the class- and system-related interrelationships between fascism and capitalism, the second attempted to construct commonalities between fascism and real socialism in an anti-communist slander. The works of Arthur Rosenberg, [421] Otto Bauer and Max Horkheimer are characteristic of the former. Rosenberg described fascism as a "bourgeois-capitalist counter-revolution", Horkheimer was of the opinion that those who were unwilling to speak of capitalism should remain silent about fascism.⁸ Marxist influences also found expression in these views, probably most clearly in the Austro-Marxist O. Bauer. Regardless of some misjudgments in the sense of the Bonapartist version, he drew the conclusion from his experiences with fascism, whose rule he described as the "dictatorship of the *belligerent* faction of the capitalist class"⁹, that the fascist dictatorship had destroyed "the illusion" of the reformist path to socialism - "without a revolutionary leap". Bauer stated quite accurately that the working class

"must first fight for its own rule and build a socialist social order through it before a complete and lasting democracy becomes possible".¹⁰

Franz Neumann's extensive and material-intensive study on the "Structure and Practice of National Socialism", published simultaneously in New York and London in 1942, was of particular importance in bourgeois fascism research.¹¹ Based on Marxist views, particularly with regard to class development in the phase of the general crisis of capitalism and the interrelationship between economy and politics that existed under these conditions, Neumann revealed revealing pages on the continuity of the exercise of power by the ruling capitalist class in Germany before and after 1933 and on the connection between monopoly rule and the fascist regime. His admissions about the failure of the political forces of bourgeois parliamentarism in the face of the looming fascist danger at the end of the Weimar Republic were also remarkable. Neumann made the cardinal error in the problem of the state. Misjudging the specific function of the state under fascist conditions, he constructed a dualism between the conventional bourgeois state (the bureaucracy) and the fascist party, from which he derived the concept of the perverted state.

"totalitarian state". F. Neumann's uncovering of structural links between monopoly capital and fascism was so explosive for the leading forces in the FRG that it was not until 1977 that a complete translation of F. Neumann's work was published.¹²

The second direction, which claimed similarities between fascism and socialism under the umbrella term of "totalitarianism" and "totalitarianism", found its conceptual expression in the USA after the beginning of the Second World War. In contrast to the theorists who used these terms in inversion of the term "total state" ("stato totalitario") used by the fascists to denounce fascist barbarism, here it became a basic component of anti-communism. Significant impulses came from the anti-communist and anti-Soviet [422] policies of right-wing Social Democratic leaders, who had long since switched to using the democracy-dictatorship scheme developed by Karl Kautsky to combat the Great October Socialist Revolution and Leninism with the concept of the "totalitarian" in

⁸ See Historikus (i.e. Arthur Rosenberg), *Der Faschismus als Massenbewegung*, Karlsbad 1934, p. 7; Max Horkheimer, *Die Juden und Europa*, in: *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 1-2/1939, p. 115 f.

⁹ Otto Bauer, *Der Faschismus*, in: Bauer, *Zwischen zwei Weltkriegen?*, Bratislava 1936, p. 136.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹¹ Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, New York/London 1942.

¹² Franz Neumann, *Behemoth. Structure and Practice of National Socialism 1933-1944*, ed. and with an epilogue

and used both to characterize fascism and fascist movements and to defame the Marxist-Leninist parties and socialist development in the Soviet Union.¹³

A symposium held by American social scientists at the end of 1939 on the problem of the "totalitarian state" and, in particular, Sigmund Neumann's "Permanent Revolution", published in 1942, played a major role in the theoretical justification of the doctrine of totalitarianism, which used arbitrary comparisons between Italian and German fascism and the socialist Soviet Union to assert their alleged social and political similarity in an extreme distortion of historical reality.¹⁴

By arbitrarily applying the concept of "permanent revolution", S. Neumann attributed a revolutionary character to fascism; at the same time, for him it was the main conceptual denominator of the aforementioned comparison, from which he attempted to derive a general model of "totalitarian rule". Fascism was thereby substantially narrowed down to the fascist party and the fascist propaganda and terror apparatus. During the joint struggle of the anti-Hitler coalition, the anti-communist version of the doctrine of totalitarianism temporarily faded into the background.

The destruction of German and Italian fascism in 1945 led to a *third stage* in the ideological-historical development of bourgeois conceptions and theories of fascism. Previous variants of the interpretation of fascism were expanded or modified, and new ones emerged. Apart from a few peculiarities of the immediate post-war years, the dominance of the main conceptual lines of this stage can be observed until the beginning of the 1960s.

In the first years after 1945, the view already practiced during the war in the USA, Great Britain and other Western countries, and also represented by bourgeois German opponents of Hitler, exerted a strong influence, reducing fascism to the fascist dictatorship in Germany and *at the same time* creating a fatalistic continuity of German history in the last hundreds of years, which had inevitably led to fascism.¹⁵ Transferring the chauvinism and nationalism of the Junkertum and the big bourgeoisie to the entire German people, fascism thus became the "nationalist people's movement" in Germany par excellence. Of course, quite a few facts about the historical failure of the exploiting class and its disastrous policies were also uncovered, but they were conceptually reinterpreted as a general "German misery" and the associated "collective guilt" of the German people for fascism. Everything that was seen as a "turning away of Germany from the West" and a resulting "special German development" was presented as particularly disastrous [423].

In contrast, the bourgeois historiography of West Germany and the later Federal Republic was soon dominated by attempts to mystify fascism, to present it as the product of Hitler's irrational "democracy". This ultimately led to the thesis of Hitler's sole responsibility for fascist barbarism. The fact that some basic elements of fascist ideology had their origins outside Germany - in particular in the racial theory of the Frenchman Gobineau and in the Englishman H. St. Chamberlain's version of the alleged superiority of the Nordic race - was used, on the other hand, to emphasize the complicity of foreign countries.¹⁶

For post-fascist capitalist society and its ideologues, the thesis of Hitler's sole guilt for fascism and the outbreak of the Second World War solved all the uncomfortable questions and problems of its recent past in the most uncomplicated way imaginable. Consequently

¹³ See Eduard Heimann, Communism, Fascism or Democracy, New York 1938; Gurt Geyer, Die Partei der Freiheit, Paris 1939; Friedrich Stampfer, Mit dem Gesicht nach Deutschland, edited by Erich Matthias, Düsseldorf 1968.

¹⁴ See Symposium on the Totalitarian State, Philadelphia 1940; Sigmund Neumann, Permanent Revolution, New York/London 1942.

¹⁵ See Edmond Vermeil, L'Allemagne. Essai d'explication, Paris 1940; William VF. McGovern, From Luther to Hitler, New York 1941; Rohen D'Olier Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, 1783 to 1933, New York 1942.

¹⁶ See Gerhard Ritter, Europa und die deutsche Frage, Munich 1948; the same, Staatskunst und Kriegshandwerk, vols. 1

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to 4, Munich 1954 to 1968.

It is not surprising that this thesis, according to which Hitler was the "media hub" of events in Germany from 1933 to 1945,¹⁷ is still one of the predominant bourgeois explanations and representations of fascism today.

In contrast, in bourgeois West German historiography up to the beginning of the 1960s, accounts that partially criticized the ruling exploiting classes for the emergence and impact of the fascist dictatorship remained a marginal or exceptional phenomenon. Neither older nor more recent works from the bourgeois historiography of Western countries, which stated an - albeit limited - complicity of monopoly capital in fascism,¹⁸ found a broader resonance in the FRG at that time. In contrast, the anti-communist doctrine of totalitarianism, which was perfected in the USA in the post-war period, rapidly grew in influence in the 1950s and ultimately dominated alongside the theory of sole guilt.

It was none other than US President Harry S. Truman who used this doctrine to justify the US ruling circles' departure from the policy of the anti-Hitler coalition and the transition to a Cold War policy, the intensified course of aggression of US imperialism against the Soviet Union and the socialist states that emerged after 1945. According to Truman, the people were to choose between a "liberal" and a "totalitarian" way of life. After the destruction of "totalitarian" fascism, the term "totalitarian" was now intended as a synonym for "socialist" and "communist".¹⁹ In the period that followed, well-known American ideologues were eager to meet these needs of US imperialism and to develop the doctrine of totalitarianism into a comprehensive, pseudo-scientifically draped concept of anti-communism. The work of Hannah Arendt and Carl J. Friedrich, and later also that of Zbigniew K. Brzeziński, had a decisive influence.²⁰

[424] Following on from the predecessors of the concept of totalitarianism prior to 1945, fascism was no longer only related to Germany and Italy, but was characterized in a similar way to socialism as a general reaction to the "mass society" of the 20th century, emanating from the masses and supported by a 19th century ideology. The existence of a state-determining party and its own ideology were arbitrarily presented as the ultimately decisive characteristics of "totalitarian systems". In the course of the 1950s, the doctrine of totalitarianism was linked to the emerging doctrine of "industrial society". To a certain extent, this enabled bourgeois ideologues to take a complex view of social development in politics and ideology, but also in the economy and other areas of fascism. To a greater extent than before, they operated with partial truths which, while taking into account a number of historical surface phenomena - above all the fascist apparatus of terror and its methods - continued to obscure the class nature of fascism, in some cases even more skillfully than before. The doctrine of totalitarianism corresponded in a special way to the interests of (West) German imperialism and its state, which had re-emerged in the wake of the "Cold War", in which anti-communism had once again become the supreme state doctrine and the fascist past had remained unresolved.²¹

In the first half of the 1960s, *the latest stage* of bourgeois historiography on the problem of fascism began. Although all the variants already outlined continued to have an impact, the declared aim of developing complex theories of fascism now came to the fore. This took place in

¹⁷ Martin Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers*, Munich 1969, p. 35.

¹⁸ See Jacques Droz, *Histoire de l'Allemagne*, Paris 1948; Claude David, *L'Allemagne de Hitler*, Paris 1954; George W. Hallgarten, *Hitler, Reichswehr and Industry*, Frankfurt a. M. 1955.

¹⁹ Public Papers of the President of the United States Harry S. Truman, Washington 1963, p. 1766 ff.

²⁰ See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York 1951 (German: *Elemente und Ursprünge totalitärer Herrschaft*, Frankfurt a. M. 1955); *Totalitarianism*, ed. by Carl J. Friedrich, Cambridge/Mass. 1954; Carl J. Friedrich/Zbigniew Brzeziński, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, Cambridge/Mass. 1956 (German: *Totalitäre Diktatur*, Stuttgart 1957).

²¹ The work of Hans Rothfels, Hans Freyer, Werner Markert, Klaus Mehnert, Theodor Schieder, Karl C. Thalheim, Richard Löwenthal, and later especially Karl Dietrich Bracher played a special role.

open and veiled confrontation with the Marxist-Leninist definition of the essence of fascism.

Similar to the previous historiographical changes, the new developments were not triggered by subject-specific, but by changed historical-political conditions and the resulting needs of the ruling class. The increasing contradictoriness and vulnerability of the capitalist system of rule at home and the change in the international balance of power in favor of socialism forced imperialist politicians and ideologues to modify their strategy and tactics, including a certain retooling of their ideological instruments. As the "strategy of peace" developed by leading social theorists of US imperialism during Kennedy's administration in particular showed, there was now a growing demand for pseudo-scientifically disguised concepts that were flexible in their domestic and foreign policy application.

The first broader echo in the development of complex bourgeois theories of fascism came in the 1960s with the work of Ernst Nolte, who, after many years of dominance of the doctrine of totalitarianism as well as irrationalist and personalizing interpretations of fascism, brought the independent general term "fascism" back into bourgeois historiography.²² The [425] "phenomenological method" he applied, which derives the understanding of historical phenomena from "how they present themselves"²³, reduced fascism to the ideology of Hitler and Mussolini. Nolte portrayed their work as an "epoch of fascism", which in fact came to an end when the two fascist dictators stepped down. In doing so, Nolte ignored both the social and political integration of fascism into the capitalist system of rule as well as the continued impact of fascist movements and dictatorships after 1945.

Since the second half of the 1960s, bourgeois historiography has made increasing efforts to gain *structuralist theories of fascism* or corresponding approaches with the help of a so-called socio-economic perspective. The proponents of these concepts claim to analyze the fascist movements and regimes increasingly in the context of economic "constraints", "conflict tendencies" and "inherent tensions", as well as "political and economic interests", although - and this is a crucial point - almost all of these considerations remain within the scope of "industrial society" theory. In the prevailing reading, the "social" and "structural" aspects that are strongly emphasized are reduced to individual elements that are usually arbitrarily taken from social reality, from the economic sphere, from the mechanism of power and class relations and related to fascism, but are absolutized and formalized.

However, one is also forced to accept statements that have long been taboo, especially in the prevailing historiography of the FRG. This applies not only to the conceded "share of the agrarians" in the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany, but also to the - admittedly limited - cooperation of industrialists and capitalist corporations with the fascist party and state apparatus. The decisive economic factors and regularities of the historical course, however, remain concealed and nebulous. As a result, fascism is not understood as a product of capitalist production relations and the general crisis of capitalism, nor as an imperialist form of rule, movement and ideology that emerges under certain conditions.

It is therefore no coincidence that bourgeois attempts to theorize fascism and imperialism coincide and complement each other.²⁴ Both phenomena and - in theoretical terms - categories,

²² See Ernst Nolte, *Zur Phänomenologie des Faschismus*, in: VfZ, 4/1962; the same, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche*, Munich 1963.

²³ Ibid., p. 53.

²⁴ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Imperialismstheorien*, Göttingen 1977; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Imperialismus*, Cologne 1972; *Studies in the Theories of Imperialism*, ed. by R. Owen/B. Sutcliffe, London 1972.

which, on the basis of historical experience, are associated with an anti-monopolistic content in the consciousness of broad sections of the masses, are to be politically defused, obscured in terms of their content and undermined or even dissolved in terms of their methodology.

If, on the one hand, imperialism is primarily understood in a subjectivist manner as, for example "a consequence of exuberant energy in the bosom of European society ..., but not (as) a necessity inherent in the system"²⁵, the objective, inner essential connection between the imperialist system of rule and fascist tendencies, movements and dictatorships is already being manipulated away from the outset.

[426] Although many so-called structuralist theories of fascism claim to be original, they combine epistemologically outdated elements of bourgeois and reformist theories and concepts. In particular, they borrow from Max Weber's theory of society, Walt Rostow's theory of the city, Franz Neumann's, Friedrich Pollock's and Ernst Fraenkel's conceptions of the state and fascism, Rudolf Hilferding's concept of capitalism and fascism and Joseph Schumpeter's concept of imperialism.

These attempts at theory formation are elements and products of a process of adaptation and retooling in bourgeois (including right-wing social democratic) "social history" writing, which aims not least to correct a one-sided idiographic view of fascism in the interest of greater effectiveness in the debate with Marxism-Leninism. In addition, this modified bourgeois historiography of fascism intervenes in a disorienting way in the discussions that take place in the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist movement about state-monopoly capitalism.

Within the structural theoretical approaches, the considerations expressed by Wolfgang Schieder, particularly in the multi-volume reference work "Soviet System and Democratic Society", are of importance for bourgeois research. Schieder, who is aware of the fact that it is not possible to get to grips with the essence of fascism through ideology alone, seeks to gain a "historical-political diagnosis" of fascism through a "social-historical analysis".²⁶ To this end, an extended investigation of the facts should be combined with "structural-historical questions"; at the same time, various "basic types of fascist rule" - for example in agrarian countries (Hungary, Romania, Spain), in agri-industrial countries (Italy) and in highly industrialized countries (Germany) - should be identified through international comparisons. However, Schieder's basic scientific and political concern only becomes apparent when he states:

"The future theory of fascism must *be a theory of fascisms*." Only then could

"the fundamental error of almost the entire previous interpretation of fascism, which has always understood the diverse manifestations of fascism only as variants of one and the same fascism, can be avoided."²⁷

Although Schieder calls for a classification of consistent characteristics of fascist dictatorships, the core of his statement is that there cannot be a *universally valid* definition of the nature of fascism - as proven by Marxist-Leninist social science.

The method underlying this assertion is not very original. On the one hand, the appearances and nature of fascism are confused, and on the other, Marxist-Leninist research on fascism is accused of ignoring the different organizational, national and historical manifestations of fascism. However, it is a truism that fascism, like every other form of capitalist rule, appears in different forms. Different forms of organization and elements of tradition, structures and

²⁵ Mommsen, Theories of Imperialism, p. 114.

²⁶ Wolfgang Schieder, Faschismus, in: Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft, ed. by C. D. Kernig et al, vol. II, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 1968, p. 438 ff.; Schieder, Faschismus und kein Ende, in: Neue politische Literatur, 2/1970, p. 187.²⁷ Derselbe, Faschismus, p. 474.

Techniques of rule and other special features already characterized the fascist movements and dictatorships in Italy and Germany. The differences in this respect between those countries and other fascist movements and dictatorships, for example in Spain, south-eastern Europe²⁸ or Latin America, were even more significant. The achieved level of capitalist production relations and the relationship of dependence to German imperialism played a particular role here. Further differences in the aforementioned manifestations can be seen between fascist movements and dictatorships before and after 1945. In this respect, Marxist-Leninist research also accepts the existence of different types of fascism. The Communist International already endeavored to identify the particularities of the various forms of fascism. In principle, however, the following applies: everywhere and at all times, fascist movements serve the anti-popular interests of the most reactionary class forces; in the past as in the present, fascist dictatorships embody the terroristic rule of the most brutal forces of monopoly capital. Here lies the core of fascism!

In Schieder's conception of the "plurality of fascisms",²⁹ the structural-historical view of fascism objectively leads to a loss of historical reality, in that it isolates fascism, as it were, and thus makes it more difficult to grasp.

Schieder's concept is also open to the application of the bourgeois "modernization" theory to fascism research. According to this, the "quality" of the various fascisms "can certainly be derived from the different stages of the modernization process".³⁰ The linking of the "modernization" theory with fascism research - a further attempt at structural-historical theory - has gained increasing influence since the 1960s, starting in the USA,³¹.

The "modernization" theory, with which the bourgeois "industrial society" doctrine is applied in an expanded way, is intended to capture the historical process since the emergence of capitalism in a more differentiated way.³² With the category of "modernization", both the world history of the past two centuries and the "overall social change" for capitalist states with different forms of government as well as for socialist states and for the so-called third world are to be analysed. However, the criteria of modernity applied by bourgeois theorists already reveal their scientific limitations through their subjectivist selection and classification. The table of values ranges from the level of literacy and income of the population to means of communication, life expectancy and settlement patterns; however, economic growth, productivity, technological status and the "development of conflict" between different social "groups" and other "structures" are particularly emphasized. The vagueness of the category "modernization" and the underestimation or even negation of the always historically concrete class struggle corresponds with the not insignificant view that various political and social forces can become promoters and supporters or opponents of "modernization".

[428] The dangerous political consequences to which this concept can lead become apparent when fascism is evaluated according to its relationship to the "modernization" process within the framework of "industrial society", as has been done above all by the North American historians and political scientists A. F. C. Organski, Barrington Moore Jr, Henry Turner Jr, Edward R. Tannenbaum,

²⁸ See Fašizam i neofašizam, Zagreb 1976; Dezső Nemes, A fasizmus kérdéséhez, Budapest 1976.

²⁹ Schieder, Fascism and no end, p. 173.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 175.

³¹ David, E. Apter, The Politics of Modernization, Chicago/London 1963; C. E. Black, The Dynamics of Modernization, New York 1966; A. F. C. Organski, The Stages of Political Development, New York 1965; Henry Ashby Turner jr, Fascism and Capitalism in Germany, Göttingen 1972; The Nature of Fascism, ed. by S. J. Woolf, London 1968. See also Maruškin, Istorija i Politika, Moscow 1969, p. 150 ff., p. 189 ff.

³² Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Modernization Theory and History, Göttingen 1975.

Roland Sarti, A. James Gregor and in a certain sense also by Peter F. Drucker and David Schoenbaum, the historians Alan Cassels from Canada, Renzo De Felice from Italy, the sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf and the Hitler biographer Joachim C. Fest from the Federal Republic of Germany.³³

This theory of fascism ascribes different effects on the "modernization" process to fascist dictatorships, whereby fascism is understood from the outset as a possible line of development of the "industrial society" of the 20th century. The accelerated technological development, the increase in production in Germany, the overcoming of "archaic" social structures or the accelerated urbanization, the reorganization of the state apparatus and the further mechanization of production in Italy appear as effects of fascist regimes that promote modernization. This gives rise to the euphemistic claim that German fascism brought about a "push towards modernity"³⁴.

As a rule, this is described as "modernization against its will", because the völkisch-germanic propaganda, the "outdated" forms of organization, the cult of blood and soil and the demagoguery of living space had an "anti-modernist" function.³⁵

While in bourgeois historiography of the USA, the "modernization" theory is applied to the interpretation of fascism in a fairly large form and a promoting function of fascist "developmental dictatorships" is also claimed for the so-called Third World, it is applied in a more differentiated way in the FRG. In historical accounts of Hitler - especially in Fest's much-discussed biography of Hitler - this theory appears in a personified form, as it were. In addition, basic ideas of the "modernization" concept are increasingly being incorporated into common interpretations and models of fascism and are obviously intended to be permanently anchored and elevated to the ideological and methodological basis of bourgeois assessments of fascism.³⁶

[429] The structural-historical conceptions of fascism, which operate with economic and social factors, inevitably forced the question of the "relationship between capitalism and fascism", which had long been feared and therefore mostly ignored in the development of bourgeois historiography, to be raised and examined. While left-opportunist and anarchist circles treat this relationship conceptually according to the equation "contemporary capitalism is always fascism" and thus advocate the thesis that, for example, in France³⁷ or Sweden³⁸ the fascist dictatorship reigns completely or partially, the dominant bourgeois historiography strives to treat the two as fundamentally different variables, which can, however, enter into a partial interrelationship in terms of content and time in certain situations. It

³³ See note 31; also Alan Cassels, *Fascism*, New York 1975; Peter F. Drucker, *Die Zukunft der Industriegesellschaft*, Düsseldorf/Vienna 1967; Renzo De Felice, *Der Faschismus. An interview by Michael A. Ledeen. With an afterword by Jens Petersen*, Stuttgart 1977; A. James Gregor, *Fascism and Modernization*, in: *World Politics*, April 1974; Barrington Moore jr, *Soziale Ursprünge von Diktatur und Demokratie*, Frankfurt a. M. 1969; Roland Sarti, *Fascist Modernization in Italy: Traditional or Revolutionary?* in: *The American Historical Review*, April 1970; Edward R. Tannenbaum, *The Goals of Italian Fascism*, in: *The American Historical Review*, April 1969. - An impression of the diffuse "modernization" criteria is given by Peter Flora, *Modernisierungsforschung*, Opladen 1974; the same, *Indikatoren der Modernisierung*, Opladen 1975.

³⁴ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany*, Munich 1965, p. 445.

³⁵ Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler. Eine Biographie*, Frankfurt a. M./ (West-)Berlin/Wien 1973, p. 1035; "Catastrophes were the element of his life". Zeit-Gespräch mit Joachim Fest, in: *Die Zeit*, vom 12. 10. 1973; Hans Mommsen, *Nationalsozialismus oder Hitlerismus*, in: *Geschichtsdidaktik*, 4/1977, p. 364; David Schoenbaum, *Die braune Revolution. Eine Sozialgeschichte des Dritten Reiches*, Frankfurt a. M./ Vienna/Zürich 1970, p. 26.

³⁶ See note 35; also Schieder, *Faschismus und kein Ende*; Klaus Hildebrand, *Anmerkungen, Kritik und Ergänzungen zu dem von einem Autorenkollektiv unter Leitung von Wolfgang Schumann ausgearbeitetes Diskussionsmaterial für das Internationale Historiker-Kolloquium in Weimar 26.-31. Mai 1975*, hektogr. Ms., p. 9; Wolfgang Wippermann, *Faschismustheorien*, Darmstadt 1976, p. 172.

³⁷ André Glucksmann, *Der alte und der neue Faschismus*, in: Foucault/Geismar/Glucksmann et al, *Neuer Faschismus - neue Demokratie*, (West) Berlin 1972, p. 16.

³⁸ *Neue Solidarität*, op. cit., vol. 1, no. 48, March 26, 1975, p. 4.

It was above all Arthur Schweitzer's workers who, in the course of the 1960s, encouraged bourgeois research to become more politically and methodologically flexible in this respect. They also stimulated the reactivation of flexible bourgeois and other non-Marxist preliminary work from previous decades.

Current bourgeois fascism research and representation attempts to interpret the *relationship between capitalism and fascism* primarily with three conceptual variants:

- with the "group model" conceived by F. Neumann and mainly practiced by Schweitzer;
- with the "Bonapartism theory" in its version based on Thalheimer, and
- with the concept of "organized capitalism" based on the ideas of Max Weber and Rudolf Hilferding.

Although these concepts concede a direct relationship between capitalism and fascism in different ways, their common core consists in fundamentally distorting the relationship between economy and politics and thus the decisive class relations in fascism.

As a result of this manipulation, the specific nature of the fascist dictatorship as a special form of state-monopoly capitalism and thus the class-based sponsorship and responsibility of the monopoly bourgeoisie for fascism is concealed and denied. Through further concessions to partial historical truths and the inclusion of classistically distorted Marxist concepts, partial insights and methods based on them, the bourgeois ideologues hope not least to combat the Marxist-Leninist characterization and representation of fascism more successfully.

Schweitzer's "group model"³⁹ builds on the model developed by F. Neumann in the early 1940s [430], which is based on the relationship of interests between the "four hierarchical groups ... Party, army, bureaucracy and industry".⁴⁰

The theoretical core - the division of power between different "power groups" in the fascist dictatorship - has gained paradigmatic value for bourgeois research.

Schweitzer starts from a wealth of model groups that are ultimately denied a class-based determination: "the party", "the upper class", "the generals", "the SS", "the middle class", "the large landowners", "the small business community", "the oligarchic party clique", "the large-scale entrepreneurs" function as autonomous factors that can be combined or atomized in various ways, whereby in this colourful pluralism of "groups" each can coexist, collaborate or collide with the other.⁴¹

In terms of Heinrich Rickert's theory of history,⁴² social groups, not just individual persons, act as historical individuals in the historical process. The fascist system of rule appears as a battlefield of different "groups". Misunderstanding the internal contradictions of this system of rule, other historians attribute to it an "anarchy of competence"⁴³, a "polycracy"⁴⁴ or even an "institutional Darwinism"⁴⁵.

³⁹ Arthur Schweitzer, *Organisierter Kapitalismus und Parteidiktatur 1933 bis 1936*, in: Schmollers Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft, 1959, p. 37 ff.; Schweitzer, *Big Business in the Third Reich*, Bloomington 1964; derselbe, *Nazifizierung des Mittelstandes*, Stutt-[430]gart 1970 - An assessment in Dietrich Eichholtz, *Alte und "new" concepts*, in: JfW, 1971/III, p. 231 ff.

⁴⁰ Neumann, *Behemoth. Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, p. 459.

⁴¹ Schweitzer, *Big Business*, p. 59.

⁴² Heinrich Rickert, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, Tübingen 1902.

⁴³ Wippermann, *Theories of Fascism*, p. 145.

⁴⁴ Peter Hüttenberger, *Nationalsozialistische Polykratie*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 4/1976; Wolfgang Horn, *Zur Geschichte und Struktur des Nationalsozialismus und der NSDAP*, in: *Neue politische Literatur*, 1973, p. 194 ff.

⁴⁵ Schoenbaum, p. 249.

According to Schweitzer, "conflict and cooperation" develop in different "fields of action". He divides the history of the fascist dictatorship in Germany into two phases. From 1933 to 1936, there was a "dualistic power structure" in which the party/SS power bloc, which was responsible for politics and ideology, was in conflict with the equally weighted power blocs of the "generals" and the "generality".

had to form a coalition with "big business". This "partial fascism" had only been replaced after 1936 by the

"full fascism" when "the party" was able to degrade the other power groups to "power holders of a lower order" due to the split in the power bloc of big business.⁴⁶

In the wake of Schweitzer, this depiction of fascism was subject to various modifications, whereby opinions on the speed of development and the stability of this form of "organized capitalism" are divided, but the theoretical and political core is ultimately accepted: The ruling classes of the imperialist German Reich, and in particular the monopoly capitalist forces, bore at most a subordinate responsibility for fascist politics in the sub-areas of capitalist economic activity. In politics, the interests of "big business" and those of the NSDAP would have intersected only occasionally and selectively. What proved to be historically decisive, however - or so this view of history would have us believe - was that from 1936/37 in particular, the previously autonomous economy was "subjected to the [431] leadership claim of the state and party"⁴⁷ or that the "old ruling class" was even completely "disempowered".⁴⁸

A view closely related to Schweitzer's concept of the "dualistic power structure" in the years 1933 to 1936 and the subsequent emergence of "full fascism" through the alleged transition to the absolute political supremacy of the fascist party is the theorem of the "dualistic power structure" put forward by the British historian Tim Mason in the mid-1960s.

"Primacy of politics".⁴⁹ Mason, who based his studies on the situation of the working class during the fascist dictatorship in Germany on this theorem, published a few years later⁵⁰, understands this to mean the "independence of the National Socialist state apparatus" in the sense that "the domestic and foreign policy of the National Socialist state leadership became increasingly independent of the determination of the economically ruling classes from 1936 onwards, even running counter to their interests in essential points"⁵¹. From mid-1938, this process ultimately led to the fascist state and its policies taking on the character of an "end in itself" and disregarding the actual interests of the capitalist system.⁵² The historical-political consequences of these views can - as with Schweitzer - lead to the historical guilt of the monopoly bourgeoisie for fascism being underestimated.

Parallel to this approach, the "Bonapartism theory" gained increasing influence in bourgeois historiography. While this theory was previously championed almost exclusively by right-wing opportunist forces in the labor movement, in recent years it has also been embraced by renowned bourgeois historians. Under the banner of "methodological pluralism", it has been incorporated into bourgeois historical thinking as a "Marxist" theory⁵³ and opposed to the Marxist-Leninist view.⁵⁴ This involves both an explicit reference to this theory and an indirect but clearly noticeable influence on other bourgeois concepts of fascism. This concerns

⁴⁶ Schweitzer, Big Business, p. 10, p. 504 f.

⁴⁷ Dietmar Petzina, Die deutsche Wirtschaft in der Zwischenkriegszeit, Wiesbaden 1977, p. 140.

⁴⁸ Wolfgang Schieder, Fascism and Anti-Fascism in Italy, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, May 9, 1978.

⁴⁹ Tim Mason, The Primacy of Politics, in: The Argument, 41/1966; Mason, Primacy of Industry. A rejoinder, in: The Argument, 47/1968.

⁵⁰ Timothy W. Mason, Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft, Opladen 1975; the same Social Policy in the Third Reich, Opladen 1977.

⁵¹ Derselbe, Der Primat der Politik, p. 474 - The thesis of the "primacy of politics" is also adopted by H. Mommsen and H. A. Winkler, among others: Hans Mommsen, Nationalsozialismus, in: Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft, IV/1971, p. 708; Heinrich August Winkler, Revolution, Staat, Faschismus, Göttingen 1978, p. 35 ff.

⁵² Mason, Arbeiterklasse, p. 162 f.; the same, Innere Krise und Angriffskrieg, in: Rüstung und Wirtschaft am Vorabend

des zweiten Weltkrieges, Düsseldorf 1975, p. 182 ff.; Mason, Sozialpolitik, p. 42 f.

⁵³ Hans-Ulrich Thamer/Wolfgang Wippermann, Faschistische und neofaschistische Bewegungen, Darmstadt 1977, p. 11.

⁵⁴ Schieder, Fascism and no end, p. 186.

above all the core thesis of this theory, according to which fascism and the Bonapartism of the 19th century are essentially identical dictatorial forms of rule that emerged on the basis of capitalist rule and are characterized by "the independence of executive power, the destruction of the political rule of the bourgeoisie and the political subjugation of all other social classes to the executive".⁵⁵ A "Bonapartist-fascist" line of continuity in the course of history is even constructed from this.⁵⁶

The fallacy of this concept is mainly based on the schematic equation of dictatorial forms of rule of capitalism in the pre-imperialist phase with those of the imperialist phase, which had already reached the stage of pronounced state-monopoly capitalism. The emergence and development of state-monopoly capitalism significantly changed the relationship between politics and economics.⁵⁷ The monopolies' urge for economic *and* political domination led to a new kind of interweaving of the economic power of the monopolies with the political and other powers of the state with the common goal of increasing the accumulation and concentration of capital, strengthening capitalist exploitation, increasing the profits of the monopolies and securing the positions of power of monopoly capital.

This interdependence in no way diminished the primary importance and specific function of the state for the preservation of capitalist society. The imperialist state's task of enforcing the overall interests of capitalist society against the opposing special interests of even powerful monopolies and the corresponding, rapidly and comprehensively growing state regulatory functions, including in the economy, increase both the general significance and the relative independence of the state vis-à-vis other areas of society.

This relationship between politics and economics inevitably includes manifold possibilities of contradiction and also contradictions between the various class fractions and groups of the monopoly bourgeoisie. The state policy under fascism, which was geared towards the interests of the extraordinarily small minority of the most expansionist and aggressive monopolies and therefore naturally interspersed with extremely adventurous elements, collided not only with the interests of the working masses, but increasingly also with the interests of large sections of the bourgeoisie, including circles of the monopoly bourgeoisie. However, this was not about any kind of "independence" of the state, but about its unscrupulous exploitation by the most reactionary, most bellicose forces of monopoly capital.⁵⁸

The failure to recognize and ignore this special interrelationship between politics and economics under the conditions of the fascist dictatorship and the misinterpretation of the resulting division of labor between state and economy as a separation of political and social power form the actual epistemological and historical-[433]political root of the equally misguided theses of the "primacy of politics" in Mason's version and of the Bonapartist "independence of executive power" under fascism.

Historians who hold anti-imperialist positions, who are critical of bourgeois conceptions of fascism and strive to apply Marxist insights and methods, particularly with regard to class analysis, are also subject to this misinterpretation.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Thalheimer, Über den Faschismus, quoted from Texte zur Faschismuskritik I. Positionen und Kontroversen, ed. by R. Kühn, Hamburg 1974, p. 21.

⁵⁶ Thamer/Wippermann, p. 6, p. 11.

⁵⁷ See W. E. Gulijew, Der imperialistische Staat in der Gegenwart, Berlin 1976; Marxist-Leninist General Theory of the State and of Law, vol. 2, Berlin 1977.

⁵⁸ See Dietrich Eichholtz/Kurt Gossweiler, Noch einmal: Politik und Wirtschaft 1933-1945, in: Das Argument, 47/1968; Dietrich Eichholtz, Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1939 bis 1945, Bd. 1: 1939-1941, Berlin 1969; Kurt Gossweiler, Großbanken, Industriemonopole, Staat, Berlin 1971 - Also informative is the study by the FRG publicist Reinhard Opitz, Europastrategien des deutschen Kapitals von 1900-1945, Cologne 1977.

⁵⁹ This is also reflected in some of Reinhard Kühn's works (derselbe, bürgerlicher Herrschaft, Reinbek b. Hamburg 1971).

The "group" and "bonapartism theory" efforts are closely related to the attempts to grasp fascism with the modified concept of "organized capitalism", which were initiated by Schweitzer in the 1960s and emerged more clearly in the 1970s. A number of more flexible interpretations have emerged, particularly from historians in the Federal Republic of Germany who are close to the SPD and social reformism, who draw on Hilferding's ideas to varying degrees and at the same time combine this with a reception of the more flexible concepts and analyses that emerged relatively early in the USA⁶⁰.

In a targeted examination of the Marxist-Leninist conception of society and, above all, the theory of imperialism, the relationship between politics, economics and society is interpreted in a more elastic way compared to other bourgeois concepts, whereby the growing position of the state is accorded central importance.⁶¹ According to Hans-Jürgen Puhle, "organized capitalism" refers to a "system of economic, social and political interaction that is essentially characterized by the close interlocking of the individual economic sectors (agriculture, industry and trade as well as the private tertiary sector) *with each other* as well as *with* the regulating, administering and, to an increasing extent, service-providing agencies of state power".⁶²

These theoretical efforts are politically motivated by the compulsion to grasp more precisely the conditions of existence and development of state-monopoly capitalism in the past and the present. In such diagnoses of a "stabilization and support action, whose most important goal is the preservation of the functioning of an already *developed* industrial capitalist economic order"⁶³ in order to justify the "chance of survival" for capitalism,⁶⁴ the effects of [434] crises of various kinds and the possibilities of solving or at least channelling them in the interests of the entire bourgeoisie receive the special attention of these historians. This historical-political effectiveness thinking fundamentally leads to a greater willingness to criticize a number of phenomena in the politics of the ruling class forces in the past and present that are considered inappropriate.

It is not surprising that the world economic crisis of 1929 to 1933, the presidential governments in Germany, German and Italian fascism, the New Deal in the USA, but also right-wing social democratic reform concepts in Northern Europe have become the field of study for this historiography.

Although bourgeois-parliamentary democracy with its "constitutional and welfare state components" and state-monopolistic regulatory possibilities is presented as the historical normal case and as the desirable variant of monopoly-bourgeois exercise of power, the thesis of the "political polyvalence" of "organized capitalism" also opens the door to viewing fascist dictatorship as one of its variants.⁶⁵

In this interpretation, fascist dictatorships are seen as a means of reinforcing concentration and centralization tendencies in the economy of highly developed capitalist countries and at the same time disciplining the masses. In other accentuations, the fascist regime in

⁶⁰ Ernst Fraenkel, *The Dual State*, New York 1941 (German: *Der Doppelstaat*, Frankfurt a. M./Köln 1974); Neumann, Behemoth; Friedrich Pollock, *Is National Socialism a New Order?*, in: *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, 9/1941, p. 440 ff. (in German: *Ist der Nationalsozialismus eine neue Ordnung?*, in: Pollock, *Stadien des Kapitalismus*, ed. and in. by H. Dubiel, Munich 1975).

⁶¹ A Marxist analysis and critique is provided by Hans-Jürgen Steinbach, *Bürgerliche Historiker und die sozialreformistische Theorie des "organisierten Kapitalismus"*, in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, 1/1978.

⁶² Hans-Jürgen Puhle, *Politische Agrarbewegungen in kapitalistischen Industriegesellschaften*, Göttingen 1975, p. 15.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 15 f.

⁶⁴ Heinrich August Winkler, *Einleitende Bemerkungen zu Hilferdings Theorie des Organisierten Kapitalismus*, in: *Organisierter Kapitalismus*, ed. by H. A. Winkler, Göttingen 197 p. 13.

⁶⁵ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The Rise of Organized Capitalism and the Intervention State in Germany*, in: *Organized Capitalism*, p. 51.

Italy as an "authoritarian substitute ... for the development of organized capitalism from below".⁶⁶

Methodologically trained on M. Weber's⁶⁷ model of the relatively autonomous three parts of society, this historiography also examines the fascist dictatorship in terms of how the relationship between the economic order, political order and social order was shaped within it and what changes it was subject to. Historians who adhere to the template of "organized capitalism" understand politics - again in Weber's sense - "primarily as a conflictual struggle to gain, assert and expand opportunities for power", whereby "it proves again and again that a certain group, faction or strategic clique is stronger and more influential and thus more assertive than others".⁶⁸ Furthermore, Weber's assertion that the "bureaucracy" dominates society and becomes increasingly independent in the process offers scope for wide-ranging interpretations of the history of fascist dictatorships.

The structuralist theories of fascism discussed here prove in their basic concern and concept to be *an* obviously consolidating trend in the bourgeois historiography of fascism today, including that of right-wing social democrats. Far from having anti-imperialist consequences, this historiography, which is occasionally misinterpreted as (neo)Marxist in the international literature, aims, on the contrary, with its negation of the qualitative, class-based determinacy of fascism, at the - sometimes very flexible - defense of the monopoly capitalist foundations of power.

[435] The *doctrine of totalitarianism* continues to occupy a central position among the attempts at interpretation, which in its main line of application links fascism with socialism and communism as an allegedly essentially identical phenomenon.⁶⁹ This doctrine forms both an independent theoretical concept and a constitutive element of the bourgeois theories of fascism derived primarily from overarching world-historical developments. In particular, the different variants of the "mobilization" theories, which seek to examine the relationship of fascism to the masses, as well as the "modernization" concept, which has been strongly brought into play in recent years, are inextricably linked to the doctrine of totalitarianism. The terms "left-wing fascism" and "left-wing totalitarianism", which are once again becoming more popular, are also rooted in this doctrine.⁷⁰

The claim made by the bourgeois side at the turn of the 1970s that this doctrine had become meaningless for bourgeois fascism research or had even been shelved has been clearly refuted by developments in recent years.⁷¹ Although the doctrine of totalitarianism has lost its formerly unchallenged position as a result of the more diverse range of bourgeois conceptions of fascism compared to the 1950s and 1960s, its actual influence has recently increased through its combination with other concepts and its forced application to the definition of the nature of the world historical epoch that began in 1917. In the last four to five years, it is precisely in this direction that the doctrine of totalitarianism has been emphasized in bourgeois fascism research.

The reasons for this are undoubtedly of a political nature. In the context of the imperialist counter-reaction to the increasing global political impact of socialism and the international policy of détente that emanated from it and successfully asserted itself despite all resistance, the

⁶⁶ Charles D. Maier, Structures of Capitalist Stability in the Twenties, in: Organized Capitalism, p. 207.

⁶⁷ Max Weber, Economy and Society, Cologne/(West) Berlin 1964.

⁶⁸ Puhle, p. 23.

⁶⁹ On the genesis and the main manifestations of this theory, see Unbewältigte Vergangenheit, Kritik der bürgerlichen Geschichtsschreibung in der BRD, ed. by G. Lozek et al., Berlin 1977, p. 38 ff.

⁷⁰ Ernst Nolte, Marxism - Fascism - Cold War, Stuttgart 1977, p. 199, p. 237 ff.; De Felice, p. 104, p. 108 f.

⁷¹ See, among others, L. B. Schapiro, Totalitarismus, in: Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft VI/1972, pp. 465 ff.; A. James Gregor, The Fascist Persuasion in Radical Politics, Princeton 1974; Schulz; Aryeh L. Unger, The Totalitarian Party, London 1974; Walter Schlangen, Totalitarismus-Theorie, Stuttgart 1976.

The doctrine of totalitarianism with its purposeful reinterpretation of the historical criticism of fascism into militant anti-communism is once again in great demand. Domestically, it serves in the countries of capital as an instrument for the defamation and persecution of democratic forces, in the FRG, for example, as a justification for the notorious "Berufsverbotserlass" (occupational bans), which make the dangers from the right harmless, but fuel anti-communism by all means. Internationally, real socialism is to be heralded with the curse of "totalitarianism", while the imperialist states, under whose wings fascist tendencies and movements are permanently rampant, appear to be the real guardians of "democracy", "freedom" and "human dignity".

The most striking feature in the most recent application of the doctrine of totalitarianism to the bourgeois interpretation and representation of fascism is an emphasized world-historical classification and evaluation of fascism. The causes, nature and determination of the historical place of fascism - problems that bourgeois historiography has never been able to answer reliably despite countless depictions of fascism - are now believed to be grasped by means of a doctrine of totalitarianism that relates to the *entire* historical course of the 20th century. Karl Dietrich Bracher and Karl Dietrich Erdmann, in particular, have recently published groundbreaking statements on this subject, albeit with very different accents in terms of detail and even more so in terms of their political conclusions.

Bracher has been particularly prominent in this regard. His more recent publications, primarily the conceptual work "Zeitgeschichtliche Kontroversen um Faschismus, Totalitarismus, Demokratie" and the comprehensive volume based on it, "Die Krise Europas 1917-1975", are dedicated exclusively to this concern.⁷² The conceptual core of both publications is the fundamental distortion of the character of the epoch that began in 1917 and continued to shape the following decades. Instead of the transition from capitalism to socialism that was actually taking place, the world-historical antinomy of "democracy" and "totalitarianism" is adopted from the conventional doctrine of totalitarianism and the "central question of the nature of democracy and dictatorship" is elevated to the cardinal problem of the 20th century. As has always been the case, "democracy" is equated with the parliamentary class rule of capital, which is presented as a "liberal-democratic constitutional state" and stylized as a "European way of life"; fascism, socialism and communism appear as basic variants of "totalitarianism". Accordingly, for Bracher, "nationalism and totalitarianism together with the experience of communist dictatorship" must always be taken into account in the "interpretation of fascism".⁷³

What is new about this application of the doctrine of totalitarianism - apart from the pointed classification of fascism in the general historical development of the 20th century - is an even more militant anti-communism and anti-Sovietism than before. This is demonstrated in a drastic way in the voluminous volume "The Crisis of Europe".

With the dominant, primitive and hate-filled anti-communism, which does not shy away from declaring Lenin to be the decisive forerunner of Hitler and deriving the entire version of fascism from this, Bracher has left the boundaries of serious bourgeois depictions of fascism far behind. Even bourgeois historians were surprised by the "provocative sharpness" of this approach.⁷⁴ However, if one considers the historical-political concept constructed by Bracher as a whole, including the political consequences for the present derived from it, his approach is by no means surprising.

Bracher continues to advocate the thesis of a "double threat to the European way of life from totalitarian dictatorships of communist and fascist character"; in a direct reversal of his

⁷² Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Zeitgeschichtliche Kontroversen um Faschismus, Totalitarismus, Demokratie*, Munich 1976; the same, *Die Krise Europas 1917-1975*, (West) Berlin 1976.

⁷³ Derselbe, *Zeitgeschichtliche Kontroversen*, p. 7, p. 10.

⁷⁴ Hans Mommsen, Im Strom von Diktatur und Demokratie, in: Die Zeit, from 17.12.1976.

In contrast to his earlier view that the "danger from the right" was the main threat to the bourgeois-parliamentary form of government, he now presents "communist Marxism" as the main threat to all democracy.⁷⁵ [437] The essential statements on the problem of fascism are assigned to this basic conception. Thus, the emergence of fascist dictatorships is not equated with "revolutions" per se, but is presented as part of a "wave of anti-democratic revolutions" triggered by the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. The historical manifestations of fascist dictatorships are used as a yardstick for the assessment of socialist states in the present; for example, when the history of the GDR appears in the aforementioned work of art as the development of the "second German dictatorship".⁷⁶ The disastrous pact between the imperialist world powers and fascist Germany, which culminated in the Munich Dictate of 1938, is ultimately turned into the historical

"doctrine" that no compromises should be made with "totalitarian systems". From this point of view, the current international détente - although verbally affirmed - is dismissed as a "sham peace" as long as the socialist states adhere to scientific socialism.⁷⁷

The compulsion of historical logic ultimately made Bracher, with his extremely anti-communist concept of totalitarianism, the crown witness of CDU circles in their strident demands to combat terrorism. When he appeared as one of the main speakers at a congress of this party on this issue, the reactionary core of his concept of fascism, which was based on the doctrine of totalitarianism, became completely clear.⁷⁸ At a time of dangerously increasing neo-fascist activities in West Germany, which prompted responsible publicists and academics from the bourgeois camp to warn of a shift to the right in this country, Bracher decisively rejected the "anti-fascist understanding of democracy" because it allegedly only favored "totalitarian" "Marxist-Leninist forms of thought". As a result, it is denied that anti-fascism and a humanistic attitude are inseparable. Rejecting the concept of fascism as a scientific category in principle, Bracher exclusively uses the general terms of "totalitarianism" or "totalitarianism" to characterize it. He made the criticism of the concept of totalitarianism and its replacement by a general concept of fascism largely responsible for "the democratic movements of the sixties and seventies" and especially for terrorism. He portrayed contemporary terrorism in capitalist countries as "clearly left-wing" and generally "Marxist-based" and finally called for the radical application of the doctrine of totalitarianism to scientific socialism and its supporters.⁷⁹

The political consequences of such an attitude are well known to anyone who knows where such militant anti-communism led the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie before and after 1933, and not only in Germany.

Karl Dietrich Erdmann develops a further variant of the doctrine of totalitarianism in its application to the problem of fascism in the most recent new edition of his book "Die Zeit der Welt- kriege".⁸⁰ On the basis of this doctrine, he constructs a world-historical "triangular relationship" between capitalism, fascism and communism (meaning real socialism), which also finds its ideal expression in the corresponding interpretations of fascism. According to this, "Soviet communism saw itself as the antithesis of liberal-bourgeois and fascist capitalism, liberal-bourgeois capitalism as the antithesis of communist and fascist totalitarianism and fascism as the antithesis of rationalism and fascism.

⁷⁵ Karl Dietrich Bracher, The abused democratization. Anti-capitalist conspiracy theories are part of the doctrine of violence, in: Die Zeit, 2.12.1977.

⁷⁶ Bracher, Die Krise Europas, p. 34 ff., p. 323 ff.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 381, p. 186 f.

⁷⁸ Bracher, The abused democratization.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Karl Dietrich Erdmann, Die Zeit der Weltkriege, Stuttgart 1976.

on the modernity of democratic liberalism and communism".⁸¹ Although Erdmann's concept as a supporter of the "bourgeois-liberal" position of capitalism is also based on the doctrine of totalitarianism, for him, unlike Bracher, the use of the general terms "fascist" and "fascism" is beyond question. Erdmann's overall socio-political assessment, with which he simultaneously denies Nolte's characterization of the period from 1917/18 to 1945 as an "epoch of fascism", contains a revealing new accentuation in the thesis: "It is not fascism alone that shapes the face of our century, but the changing alliances and enmities in the triangular relationship between the liberal bourgeoisie, fascism and communism."⁸²

The insinuation of the possibility of "alliances" between fascism and real socialism, for which once again the treaty between the governments of the USSR and Germany of August 1939 is used as a supposed historical example, is so absurd that a serious discussion of it seems superfluous, since this kind of argument consists of the primitive procedure of declaring a bilateral treaty to be an alliance treaty without further ado. On the other hand, when Erdmann speaks of possible alliances between "liberal-bourgeois" and "fascist" capitalism, this corresponds to the reality before and after 1945. Suffice it to recall the anti-Soviet plots of the imperialist Western powers and fascist Germany as well as the close relationship between the USA and other capitalist states and fascist Portugal, Spain and the Pinochet regime in Chile.

Although Erdmann, as a historian, understandably leaves open for the present and future what "alliance" against whom and with whom the bourgeois-parliamentary system of capitalist rule and also its manifestation in the FRG should enter into in certain situations, his fundamental question makes highly revealing references to the problem of fascism:

1. it is admitted that fascism is a variant of capitalist rule;
2. It is recognized - and this fundamentally distinguishes Erdmann's views from those of Bracher and other militant anti-communists - that in certain situations alliances between "bourgeois democracies" and socialist states in the joint fight against fascist dictatorships are historically possible and, as the anti-Hitler coalition proved, can be vital;
3. it is admitted that the decisive link for the alliances between "bourgeois democracies" and fascist dictatorships is anti-communism; [439]
4. However, the ability and worthiness of fascism to form alliances also contributed to a certain extent to the softening of the criticism of fascism in bourgeois historiography in recent years.

Erdmann's statements can lead to the logical conclusion that alliances with fascist dictatorships are something completely normal. *This* once again highlights the danger and the dilemma of the doctrine of totalitarianism, even if only partial concessions are made in this direction.

It is significant that Bracher takes precisely those ambivalent pages in Erdmann's writing as an opportunity to polemicize against the term fascism, which is used there as a general term. Contrary to Erdmann's explicit recognition of the concept of fascism as a "generic term"⁸³, Bracher insinuates a synonymous evaluation and application of the terms fascism and totalitarianism.⁸⁴ In this way, Bracher wants to make the independent concept of fascism appear at least superfluous

⁸¹ A similar conceptual approach can be found in *Nolte*, *Marxismus - Faschismus - Kalter Krieg*, p. 99 ff.

⁸² Erdmann, p. 376.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

⁸⁴ Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Zeitgeschichte im Wandel der Interpretationen*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift*, 255/1977, p. 635 ff.

and at the same time blur the serious differences between his own and Erdmann's conception of fascism.

The entire history of the development of the concept and doctrine of totalitarianism, above all its absolutely dominant role as an instigator of anti-relaxation policies and as a main carrier of the ideology of anti-communism, proves its general uselessness for a historical and social thinking that claims to be scientific. We must also agree with those bourgeois historians who reject the doctrine of totalitarianism because it negates the mobilizing effect of anti-fascism.⁸⁵

The question of the relationship between fascism and the masses and the individual classes and strata of capitalist society has always been one of the most important problem areas in the international discussion of fascism and the debate between bourgeois and Marxist-Leninist historical ideology. A number of bourgeois concepts, sometimes vaguely referred to as "mobilization theories", seek to trace the "mobilizing force" of fascism from their point of view.

One trait of the prevailing bourgeois historiography is to exonerate the monopoly-bourgeois forces and the imperialist system of rule in general and to incriminate the masses through *various distortions of the relationship of the masses to fascism*. Nationalism has gained in importance as an explanatory factor for the mass influence of fascism. At the same time, this opens up a field for bourgeois historians to explore imperialist approaches to the problem of the masses.

Three aspects deserve particular attention:

Firstly, the dominant historiography of fascism reacted to the increased fascist activities in highly developed capitalist countries and in countries of the so-called Third World in the 1960s and 1970s with a new edition of the assertion that fascism was primarily an expression of the nationalist will of the masses.⁸⁶ Such interpretations, which derived the class character of fascism from its mass base, had already served to rehabilitate the ruling class forces of the NATO partner FRG in bourgeois historiography in the 1950s.⁸⁷ After the assertion that the fascist dictatorship in Germany arose in the "struggle against the class order" and that fascism came to power "from below" had been reheated,⁸⁸ the "nationalization of the masses" is now presented as the culmination of a new policy rooted in the idea of popular sovereignty founded by Rousseau.⁸⁹

Secondly, there has been an attempt to analyze fascism "as a social movement" in a more differentiated way.⁹⁰ It is characteristic of the studies, which are often conducted using quantitative research methods, that although they trace some of the effects of historically concrete events (e.g. the First World War, inflation, the world economic crisis, imperialist peace treaties) on certain social strata, they negate the essential interrelationships between the imperialist system of rule, the first stage of the general crisis of capitalism and the changes in the political organization of bourgeois society in the highly developed capitalist countries forced by new class struggle conditions. Instead, the relevant observations are usually guided by the intention to explain the emergence of fascist parties, organizations and tendencies as a product of the - in individual cases quite differently assessed - "new class struggle".

⁸⁵ Thamer/Wippermann, p. 246.

⁸⁶ Gregor.

⁸⁷ Hans Kohn, *The Twentieth Century*, New York 1957; Raymond Martin, *Le National-socialisme Hitlérien. Une dictature populaire*, Paris 1959.

⁸⁸ Peter H. Merkl, *Die alten Kämpfer der NSDAP*, in: *Sozialwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch für Politik*, ed. by R.

Wildenmann, Munich/Vienna 1971, p. 498; William S. Allen, "Das haben wir nicht gewollt!", Gütersloh 1966, p. 9.

⁸⁹ George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses*, (West) Berlin 1977.

⁹⁰ *Fascism as a social movement*, edited by W. Schieder, Hamburg 1976.

social situation and political situation of individual classes and groups, especially the urban petty bourgeoisie. Ultimately, this is where the seeds of fascism and the starting point of its history are to be planted.

More far-reaching political implications are associated with the distinction made by the Italian historian Renzo De Felice between the fascist regime, which he attributes with the attribute of negativity, and the fascist movement, which he attributes with vitality. De Felice justifies this deliberate differentiation of the fascist movement with its "moral content", which he sees embodied in the fascist movement's efforts for renewal in Italy.⁹¹

Such objectively justifying evaluations, which see a kind of "Jacobinism" in fascist tendencies and movements,⁹² are not least a result of the bourgeois research method, which understands the fascist movement as it has presented itself. This so-called "going along" method reveals the possible political consequences of the "mobilization concepts" of bourgeois fascism research in a particularly glaring way.

In the predetermined intention to grasp the "mobilizing power" of fascism and the network of dependence or independence "on certain forces and certain interests", independence "from certain forces and certain interests",⁹³ the "middle class thesis", according to which fascism is an independent and dynamic political expression of the petty bourgeoisie - either a part of the rising (in Italy) or the downwardly mobile (in Germany) - and other population groups such as the "desperados" of the First World War.⁹⁴

Two modifications have been made to Martin S. Lips' formulation of "extremism of the center"⁹⁵, which was considered inappropriate:

On the one hand, the NSDAP is portrayed as a "people's party" in the sense of a "non-democratic integration party". In the fascist dictatorship, however (and this is a well-known statement), the "autonomy of the National Socialist leadership core - in the last instance: Hitler himself" in the consolidation of strategic goals was undisputed. His policies were the most extreme case of the independence of an ideology of petty-bourgeois origin.⁹⁶

On the other hand, this assertion is supplemented by the endeavor to make the Volkartei these more efficient by linking it to the alliance theory. With this in mind, Hans Mommsen emphasizes the "pull effect" of the NSDAP before 1933, which the "traditional upper class" - like other social groups - would not have been able to escape, and which thus only completed the process that turned this party into a "virtual people's party". In the fascist dictatorship, the alliance of interests was ultimately shifted more and more in favor of the commanding power of the National Socialist leadership.⁹⁷

This creates a picture that shows the monopoly bourgeois forces as being involved in fascist politics to a certain extent, but places their level of responsibility in the same category as other social groups, thus distorting the historical truth.

Thirdly, those bourgeois accounts of the 1970s that discuss the relationship between fascism and the working class attract attention.

⁹¹ De Felice, p. 34.

⁹² Eugen Weber, *Varieties of Fascism*, London/New York 1964, p. 139.

⁹³ De Felice, p. 54.

⁹⁴ Ibid.; Michael H. Kater, *Sozialer Wandel in der NSDAP im Zuge der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung*, in: *Faschismus als soziale Bewegung*, p. 25 ff.

⁹⁵ Martin S. Lipset, *Fascism - the Left, the Right and the Center*, in: *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 3/1959.

⁹⁶ Heinrich August Winkler, *Mittelstandsbewegung oder Volkspartei?*, in: *Faschismus als soziale Bewegung*, p. 97 ff.; p. 112.

⁹⁷ Hans Mommsen, *Zur Verschränkung traditioneller und faschistischer Führungsgruppen in Deutschland beim Übergang von der Bewegungs- zur Systemphase*, in: *Faschismus als soziale Bewegung*, p. 165, p. 176.

The deepest contradictions and conflicts between the working class and fascism, described by Mason as an expression of the "antagonism of interests within class society", cannot be overlooked even by bourgeois historians. For historians such as Mason, the German working class also presented itself after 1933 as an actively acting and fighting force that resisted in various ways being made a tool of "ruthless capitalist interests and National Socialist politics". However, Mason relativizes such insights gained under the compulsion of the sources: his main conceptual thesis of the coexistence of a capitalist economic order and political (fascist) dictatorship, which ultimately took on a life of its own and thus overrode the mechanisms of class rule, represents a decisive cognitive barrier to a correct understanding of the class nature of the fascist regime.⁹⁸

Bracher, however, sets a different tone. With regard to German fascism, he states that the "main slogan of national socialism" - the reconciliation of workers and the nation state - has retained its epochal significance to this day⁹⁹ and thus articulates the significance of such analyses for bourgeois ideology. In the course of the revaluation of nationalism in international bourgeois historiography, "national-socialism", misunderstood as a "mixed ideology", is judged to be a "successful ideological formula".¹⁰⁰

The conceptually underpinned idea of an objective, essential connection between the working class and fascism, mediated via bourgeois nationalism, also allows for further manipulation in an anti-communist sense. This historiographical tendency is reinforced by those North American political scientists who seek to prove *an* inherent affinity between fascism and the working class with the assertion of the "non-revolutionary disposition" of the working class, which was aptly grasped and utilized by fascism.¹⁰¹

One particularly striking falsification, which goes beyond the views outlined above, even recognizes the NSDAP as a workers' party.¹⁰² Although this primitive view of history is unlikely to be widely disseminated, it nevertheless expresses a line of the bourgeois view of fascism in the present, albeit in an absurdly exaggerated form.

Bourgeois historiography on fascism has always been characterized by a *subjectivist basic trait*, which is reflected in almost all interpretations to varying degrees and in different forms. It testifies to the ultimately class-related limitations of adequately grasping the dialectic of the objective and the subjective and applying it to the history of fascism. Rather, a one-sided emphasis, treatment and absolutization of the historical subject, the subjective factor or some of its elements is characteristic of this understanding of history.¹⁰³ This can be seen in the overemphasis on the power of the fascist party and the thesis of the independence of the executive as well as in the excessive overestimation of individual fascist leaders. This subjectivization of fascism can be associated with different historical-political statements.

Subjectivism finds a characteristic form of expression in the *psychologizing treatment of the problem of fascism*. Since the end of the 1960s, bourgeois historiography, particularly in the USA, has increasingly adopted such approaches.¹⁰⁴ They signify the deepening of the intellectual crisis of [443] bourgeois society and its objective

⁹⁸ Mason, *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*, p. XX, p. 27, p. 42, p. 78, p. 169; the same, *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich*, p. 42 ff.

⁹⁹ Bracher, *Zeitgeschichtliche Kontroversen*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Wolffsohn, *Linker und rechter National-Sozialismus*, in: *Zeitschrift für Politik*, 1/1977, p. 78.

¹⁰¹ Gregor, p. 153, p. 173, p. 209.

¹⁰² Max Kele, *Nazis and Workers*, Chapel Hill 1972.

¹⁰³ See, for example, Louis L. Snyder, *Encyclopedia of the Third Reich*, London 1976.

¹⁰⁴ See *The Psychoanalytic Interpretation of History*, ed. by B. B. Wolman, New York/London 1971; *Explorations in Psychohistory. The Wellfleet Papers*, ed. by R. J. Lifton with E. Olson, New York 1974; *Geschichte und Psychoanalyse*, ed. by H.-U. Wehler, Cologne 1971.

social causes; they testify to the uncertainty of bourgeois historians who, by resorting to psychologism, want to find possible explanations for the crisis phenomena of capitalist society in the past and present.

Psychological interpretations of fascism appear primarily in a wealth of biographical works,¹⁰⁵ for which it is characteristic that they overestimate particularities of the individual development of fascist leaders - e.g. from childhood - and greatly underestimate or negate the most important social factors, which could not have been predetermined by the psychological individualization for the path to the top of the fascist party and state.

The so-called *Hitler wave* that emerged in the first half of the 1970s *represents* a high point in the subjectivist interpretation of fascism.¹⁰⁶ The prevailing historiography and journalism, especially in the FRG and the USA, tended to tone down bourgeois criticism of fascism to an extent and intensity never seen before. To a large extent, it is characterized by an emphatic trivialization and a massive justification, culminating in a decidedly positive characterization of Hitler and his criminal policies.

With the variously varied thesis of Hitler's "sole guilt", which reduced the fascist system of rule to Hitler's "dictatorship", bourgeois historiography in the Federal Republic contributed intensively to the distortion of the image of fascism from the very beginning. The stereotypes of "abuse of power", "terror" and of the "dictatorship" related to the person of Hitler were "tyranny" have become entrenched above all in the consciousness of broad sections of the population of the FRG and strongly influence their image of fascism, which is to be kept free of anti-imperialist, anti-monopolistic consequences through this superficial personalistic limitation. The thesis of the "irrational", which dominated Hitler's politics,¹⁰⁷ continues to fulfill a primary ideological function in bourgeois historical thinking.

Most of the publications written in the course of the so-called Hitler wave were able to build on these preliminary achievements conceptually. In the Hitler biography¹⁰⁸, which is obviously the most widespread in capitalist states, Fest attempts to elevate Hitler, who was "nobody's instrument"¹⁰⁹, to the status of a great historical personality while overemphasizing his psychological peculiarities.

In contrast to the conventional thesis of bourgeois historiography of Hitler's "sole guilt", Fest takes a new approach: Rejecting the historical verdict of guilt as a "moral consideration", the more neutral [444] and "objective" evaluations of "sole responsibility" or the "individual character" of a "great historical personality" are used in its place. In this respect, Fest's portrayal of Hitler not only serves to exonerate the imperialist class forces of fascism, but also to historically valorize Hitler and thus fascism.

Fest also met with approval from leading historians in West Germany. Theodor Schieder showed solidarity with him, and Bracher once again used the opportunity to polemicize against the Marxist view of history and praise Fest for dispensing with the "fashionable use of a general theory of fascism that explains little".¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ See, among others, Werner Maser, Adolf Hitler. Legende, Mythos, Wirklichkeit, Munich/Esslingen 1971; derselbe, Hitlers Briefe und Notizen, Düsseldorf 1973; Bradley F. Smith, Heinrich Himmler, Stanford 1971, derselbe, Adolf Hitler, Stanford 1967; Robert G. L. Waite, Adolf Hitler's Anti-Semitism, in: The Psychoanalytic Interpretation of History, p. 192 ff.; William C. Langer, Das Adolf-Hitler-Psychogramm, Vienna 1973.

¹⁰⁶ Manfred Weißbecker, Entteufelung der braunen Barbarei, Berlin 1975; Unbewältigte Vergangenheit, pp. 126 ff., 334 ff.

¹⁰⁷ Hans Rothfels, Die Geschichtswissenschaft in den dreißiger Jahren, in: Deutsches Geistesleben und Nationalsozialismus, Tübingen 1965, p. 92.

¹⁰⁸ Firm.

¹⁰⁹ "Catastrophes were the element of his life", in: Die Zeit, from October 12, 1973.

¹¹⁰ Theodor Schieder, Hitler vor dem Gericht der Weltgeschichte, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, dated October 27, 1973; Karl Dietrich Bracher, Hitler - die deutsche Revolution, in: Die Zeit, dated October 12, 1973.

The "Hitler wave" also encouraged neo-fascist forces to renew their ideological activities. They are still primarily trying to rehabilitate Hitler and the fascist leadership clique and absolve German fascism of any significant blame for the Second World War.¹¹¹ Not least under the impression of the critical reaction of the international public, mainly in France, but also in the USA and Great Britain, the persistent fight of democrats of the FRG¹¹² and the increasingly concerned attitude of anti-fascist bourgeois forces, it seems advisable to some well-known historians of the Federal Republic to evaluate the "attackable book" and the corresponding "superfluous film" in a critical and distanced manner.¹¹³

The negation of the "socio-historical perspective" is noted as disconcertingly as the "trivialization of the regime's wars". With regard to the ideological effects of such historical propaganda, Hermann Graml cannot help but note that such "immunization" of the population in the anti-Hitlerist sense "is about as useful as a vaccination against a revolver bullet".¹¹⁴ However, this criticism falls short: the Hitler wave was not about "insufficient immunization"! On the contrary: by deliberately elevating Hitler to the status of a great historical personality and infamously making him the "German phenomenon of the revolution"¹¹⁵, a role model - attractive in its own way - was created, especially for young people.

The so-called Hitler wave was one of the most massive ideological activities in the historiographical field in the history of the FRG. Hundreds of thousands of citizens [445] of the FRG were reached by this image of Hitler, particularly through the film industry's adaptation of Fest's book. Such vehemently developed ideological campaigns are not only grist to the mill of the most reactionary, openly pro-fascist forces, but also curb the impact and spread of democratic ideas through their fascination effect alone. This is all the more the case as they can develop under conditions in which the general crisis of capitalism is deepening, the FRG has been exposed to a series of political pressures, e.g. from terrorist groups and the fight against them, and they also encounter a population which, for the most part, does not have a consolidated anti-fascist view of history, but has been brought up to have a basic anti-communist attitude.

Although some bourgeois historians see the image of fascism conveyed by Fest and others as politically inappropriate and conceptually too inflexible - especially in the confrontation with Marxist-Leninist and other anti-imperialist forces - there is no doubt that Th. Schieder's view that Fest's book

"would not have been conceivable without the previous achievements" of bourgeois historiography.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, Fest's account must appear "ambivalent" to those bourgeois historical ideologues concerned with an anti-Hitlerian reputation: on the one hand, the "appearance" that Fest wanted to reconcile the population of the FRG with Hitler is "offensive" to them,¹¹⁷ on the other hand, Fest reworks traditional theses of the bourgeois image of fascism in the historiography of the FRG.

There is no doubt that the "Hitler wave" in its extreme manifestations went too far for a number of bourgeois historians. Golo Mann had already written about the objective ideological effects

¹¹¹ See, among others, Erich Kern (i.e. Erich Knud Kernmayer), *Adolf Hitler und das Dritte Reich*, Oldendorf 1971; David L. Hoggan, *Der unnötige Krieg*, Tübingen 1974; Albert Speer, *Spandauer Tagebücher*, Frankfurt a. M./ (West-)Berlin/Wien 1975; Carl Vincent Krogmann, *Es ging um Deutschlands Zukunft*, Leoni a. Lake Starnberg 1977.

¹¹² For example: *Was verschweigt Fest?*, *Analysen und Dokumente zum Hitler-Film von J. C. Fest*, ed. by J. Berlin et al., Cologne 1978.

¹¹³ Hermann Graml, *Ein überflüssiger Film*, in: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 11/1977, p. 669 ff.; Eberhard Jäckel, *Literaturbericht: Rückblick auf die sogenannte Hitler-Welle*, in: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 11/1977, p. 695 ff.; Mommsen, *Nationalsozialismus oder Hitlerismus*, p. 360 ff.

¹¹⁴ Graml, p. 673 f.

¹¹⁵ Fest, p. 1035.

¹¹⁶ Schieder, *Hitler before the court*.

¹¹⁷ Jäckel, p. 707 f.

1973 reflects: "The longer one spends with a hero, his origins, the motives that influenced him, his psychology, the more one is inclined to understand him, from which ... is only one step to forgiveness - and then to admiration."¹¹⁸

A further expression of the subjectivism of the bourgeois interpretation of fascism - although not comparable to the "Hitler wave" in terms of its political and historical statements - is found in the elimination of and limitation to the history of the German people. The views developed in the 1930s and 1940s, which overestimated a number of peculiarities of German history and derived a "German misery" from them, also experienced a revival.

At present, nationalist tendencies, neo-fascist activities and attacks on bourgeois democracy in the FRG are registered with concern by bourgeois historians in the countries whose peoples fought in the anti-Hitler coalition and are also incorporated in different ways into the historiography of fascism. Some of these historians, however, explain the particular aggressiveness of German imperialism, the "separation of Germany" from Western Europe and the USA and the "solo efforts" of the ruling classes in Germany, which would have been compressed into the establishment of the fascist dictatorship and its expansionism, from a reactionary line of historical ideas that dominates German history in particular and a correspondingly militant "German" tradition of thought and behavior.¹¹⁹

[446] This interpretation - varied in many ways, especially in journalism - often discredits the democratic legacy of German history and valuable cultural and scientific achievements. In the form of the "Western pluralistic value system", the supposedly only democratic alternative to German nationalism and fascism, the social order that gave rise to fascism is simultaneously valorized in a vulgar manner. Extreme views advocate those still lingering folk-psychological-biological positions that portray "the German mentality", the German par excellence, as exceptionally susceptible to fascism.¹²⁰

Partly distancing themselves from such nationalistic coarsening, other psychological approaches, which seek to combine the social and the psychological, attempt to analyze the social and the psychological through the analysis of

"group-typical behavior and experiences" (e.g. German youth from 1914 to 1920) to explain fascism.¹²¹ Despite revealing individual statements, however, this research also proves unable to explain the nature of fascist movements in Germany. Ultimately, they see fascism as a politically class-indifferent, aggressive mass movement determined by a "charismatic leader" and supported by disappointed, frustrated groups.

In the dominant historiography of the FRG on fascism, which has always been intent on interpreting the problem of continuity in German history flexibly, there are clear attempts to elastically counter or modify the thesis that fascism was a characteristic expression of mobilized Germans and German history. In the 1970s, this conceptual line is now clearly reinforced in the fluid of a "modern nationalism", in which fascism is seen as "the complete perversion of the German national idea and its instrumentalization in favour of a biologicistic ideology completely detached from the historically evolved nation".¹²² At a distance from such crude "definitions", a number of other concepts unfold - in a certain sense also as

¹¹⁸ Golo Mann, Hitler - for the last time?, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, October 13/14, 1973.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, Daniel Gasman, The Scientific Origins of National Socialism, London/New York 1971.

¹²⁰ Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society, Stuttgart 1965.

¹²¹ Peter Loewenberg, The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort, in: The American Historical Review, December 1971.

¹²² Andreas Hillgruber, Entwicklung, Wandlung und Zerstörung des deutschen Nationalstaates 1871-1945, in: 1871-1971. Fragen an die deutsche Geschichte. Historical exhibitions in the Reichstag building in Berlin and in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt am Main on the occasion of the centenary of the founding of the Reich, no date, p. 195.

critical reflection on the numerous Hitler biographies - arguments that explain the mass influence of German fascism to a large extent as the result of a "naïve political popular piety of immense proportions that was retained and produced by National Socialism" and at the same time - albeit subordinate in importance - refer to the "promotion" of the Hitler cult by "many 'old' authorities in state, society and church".¹²³ Even with this weighting, which works with partial truths, it is clear, especially as other determinants remain unnoticed, who is to be blamed and who is to be exonerated.

Some of the studies mentioned are certainly capable of uncovering certain aspects of the history of fascism. However, what remains decisive for the value of knowledge is that the reduction of history to a series of observable [447] facts, the exaggeration and independence of individual aspects of the historical subject on the one hand, and the relativization and underestimation of the socio-economic foundations and political mechanisms of imperialism on the other, sets clear limits to a comprehensive uncovering of the nature and manifestations of fascism.

As different as the current bourgeois concepts for interpreting and portraying fascism may be, they all have one thing in common: the distortion and combating of the Marxist-Leninist concept and theory of fascism. This is usually done according to the age-old anti-Marxist method of constructing one's own distorted image of an allegedly "Marxist" view and then blithely refuting it. In this case, *three lines of argument* dominate:

Firstly, a discrepancy between Marxist-Leninist theory and empirical historical research is claimed; *secondly*, this theory is accused of dogmatic one-sidedness and the construction of a fatalistic connection between capitalism and fascism; and *thirdly*, this theory is accused of prematurely generalizing the particularities of the fascist dictatorship in Germany from 1933 to 1945 and schematically transferring them to other countries and situations.

The first approach¹²⁴ mainly attempts to portray the Marxist-Leninist theory of fascism as a doctrine that arose outside of historical experience and research and was constructed primarily for pragmatic political purposes, whose main function was to hit the political opponent. Ultimately, a "political misuse of the term fascism" is attributed to this theory.¹²⁵

In reality, the Marxist-Leninist theory of fascism is based on the many years of experience of the class struggle of the revolutionary workers' movement, gathered from the first appearance of fascist movements in Italy and Germany in the early 1920s. This theory generalizes the lessons of the real course of history. The decisive qualitative leap in this progressive process of knowledge was achieved with the classical definition of the nature of fascism in power by Dimitroff at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International.¹²⁶ It represented an exact scientific analysis of fascism. But just as Marx, with his discovery of the theory of surplus value as the core of capitalist exploitation, did not yet provide the entire scientific instrument for grasping all the phenomena of the capitalist system, the fundamental definition of the nature of fascism did not encompass all aspects of the Marxist-Leninist conception of fascism. This conception and the theory on which it is based is based on the complex analysis of capitalism in its imperialist stage and its economic, political and ideological manifestation as the ruling system of state-monopoly capitalism,

¹²³ Martin Broszat, Bayerns Bevölkerung und der Nationalsozialismus, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, December 10/11, 1977.

¹²⁴ See for example Iring Fetscher, Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus, in: Politische Vierteljahresschrift, 1962, p. 42 ff.; Turner jr, p. 180 f.; Wippermann, Faschismustheorien, p. IX, p. 53; Faschismus als soziale Bewegung, p. 13 f.

¹²⁵ See Bracher, Zeitgeschichtliche Kontroversen, p. 7, p. 14; Joachim Besser, Wer ist eigentlich ein Faschist?, in: Vorwärts, from April 8, 1976.

¹²⁶ See the contribution by Elfriede Lewerenz in this volume, p. 21 ff.

whereby the different [448] quality of the exercise of fascist rule compared to other forms of capitalist rule is clearly characterized.

On this basis, reliable criteria for the scientific investigation and evaluation of the specific historical phenomena in all social areas of fascism, both in the fields of the economy and the state as well as political movements and ideology and culture, are provided. Those who ignore this clear identification of fascism are not only in danger of "political misuse of the term fascism", but also of a general misinterpretation.

This situation already shows how absurd the second line of argument against the Marxist-Leninist theory of fascism is, which accuses it of dogmatic one-sidedness. The attribution of economic one-sidedness with the help of the so-called agent theory plays a special role here.¹²⁷ This is intended to suggest that the Marxist-Leninist theory of fascism allegedly limits itself to viewing the fascist rulers as mere recipients of orders - agents - of monopoly capital or certain monopoly groups. This is intended to give the impression that the fascist dictatorship and its power mechanism are reduced to a linear functional relationship of subordination to monopoly capital or individual monopoly groups. However, it is a hallmark of Marxist-Leninist research to consider the internal contradictions of all types of imperialist systems of rule, in which, among other things, competitive struggles, different political strategies of bourgeois class factions or other forces and opposing tendencies in the power mechanism can play a role.

The economistic simplification of the dialectical-materialist view of history and society has always been a favorite method of anti-Marxists of all stripes. It always draws on two fundamental distortions: Firstly, philosophical monism and its own consistently materialist approach to historical phenomena and processes is passed off as primitive economism, and secondly, materialist dialectics, which grasps all decisive social phenomena in a complex relationship, is ignored.

Bourgeois ideologues are unable to grasp the dialectical relationship between economics, politics and ideology in particular. Only the materialist definition of the essence of fascism, derived primarily from economic conditions, makes it possible to take into account the relative independence and active influence of politics (e.g. the state) and ideology (e.g. the fascist party) on the economic basis in its real significance. However, this does not take place outside or alongside the prevailing economic conditions, but within their framework and on their basis - fascism as an outgrowth of the capitalist system.

The bourgeois ideologues attempt to present this overall social classification of fascism and its position in the historical process of the 20th century through the Marxist-Leninist conception of fascism as an assertion of a fatalistic correlation or even the identity of capitalism and fascism. Among the most common arguments here are the theses that the Marxist theory of fascism would describe fascism as an inevitable "product of capitalism in crisis" and therefore in a scientifically inadmissible "one-dimensional" way, "monocausal" simplification.¹²⁸

The insinuation of a fatalistic view of history is also one of the old hats of anti-Marxism and anti-communism. Three decisive facts of Marxist-Leninist history

¹²⁷ This version is contained in all the leading bourgeois works on the problem of fascism, so that special evidence is superfluous. A characteristic example of the mixture of ignorance of research history and anti-communist blindness, however, can be found in Turner Jr, p. 160.

¹²⁸ See, for example, John Weiss, *The Fascist Tradition*, New York/Evanston/London 1967, p. IX, p. 5; Eike Hennig, *Industrie und Faschismus*, in: *Neue Politische Literatur*, p. 439; Bracher, *Die Krise Europas*, p. 17; the same, *Zeitgeschichte im Wandel*, p. 638; Wippermann, *Faschismustheorien*, p. 12; Winkler, *Revolution, Staat, Faschismus*, p. 87.

position are deliberately overlooked: On the one hand, Marxist-Leninist social science has assumed since Lenin that capitalism in its imperialist state generally and permanently - not only in times of acute crisis - has an inherent urge towards reaction and intensified oppression. On the other hand, a clear distinction is made between various possible ways out of such crisis situations, although the danger of fascist attempts at a solution is always present. Marxist-Leninist research, however, does not claim that the establishment of the fascist dictatorship and the development of fascist movements was, as it were, a strategy of the monopoly bourgeoisie - from 1918, for example - or even a policy simply agreed upon from the outset by monopoly lords and the leaders of fascist groups and parties. After all, since the first emergence of fascist movements, one of the main concerns of the revolutionary workers' movement has always and everywhere been to consistently counteract them and to do everything possible to prevent the establishment of fascism by the state.

The attacks against the Marxist-Leninist theory of fascism, which accuse it of a one-sided orientation towards the fascist dictatorship in Germany from 1933 to 1945 and the arbitrary generalization of its particularities, are motivated in different ways. They boil down to either strictly rejecting any generalized theory of fascism or countering the alleged inadequacy of the Marxist-Leninist conception of fascism with the scientific superiority and seriousness of various bourgeois theories. The supporters of the former version, most of whom tend towards conservative political positions, regard "National Socialism" in Germany as a historically unique phenomenon, more or less tied to the person of Hitler and his clique. For them, any generalized view of fascism is suspect from the outset.¹²⁹ Those ideologues, on the other hand, who do not limit fascism to the Hitler regime, insinuate that the Marxist-Leninist theory of fascism would transfer the definition of the nature of German fascism mathematically to countries with completely different conditions - such as Italy, Hungary, Romania before 1945 or fascist developments in Latin America after 1945 - without sufficient empirical research. In doing so, attempts are made above all to cite the different stages of economic development of capitalism and the corresponding degree of influence of monopoly capital as well as the different forms of fascist movements.¹³⁰

However, the supposed inconsistencies are not at the expense of the Marxist-Leninist conception of fascism, but at the expense of its overzealous critics, who overlook or deliberately confuse some things here. With regard to the supposed economic immaturity of backward capitalist countries for the existence of fascist regimes - which runs counter to the Marxist-Leninist definition of fascism - the expansive nature of imperialism and the resulting international interdependence of monopoly capital as well as the particularly reactionary role of the main imperialist powers vis-à-vis so-called developing countries are once again ignored. As far as the different forms of the political movement and the mass base of fascism are concerned, the nature and appearance of fascism are identified in a short-sighted way. It is no coincidence that the definition of the nature of fascism given at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International contains no specific statement on this. Even then, different types and forms of fascist political movements were known, not only in Italy and Germany, but also in Hungary, Poland, Romania, France, Portugal and other capitalist countries.

The genesis of the theory of fascism demonstrates the very important characteristic of Marxist-Leninist research of separating itself from views which - such as the thesis of "social fascism", which was incorrect from the outset but not inexplicable - prove to be scientifically incorrect and inaccurate.

¹²⁹ See, for example, Louis L. Snyder, *Hitler and Nazism*, New York 1967; Schulz, p. 171 f.; Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Der Faschismus*, in: Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon, vol. 8, Munich 1973, p. 547 ff.; Bracher, *Zeitschichtliche Kontroversen*, p. 18 ff.

¹³⁰ Characteristic of this is the contribution by Schieder, *Faschismus*.

have also proved to be politically inhibiting. The bourgeoisie and right-wing opportunist ideologues, on the other hand, have for decades either clung to the old clichés that are supposed to free the capitalist system from the stigma of fascism, or they strain the demagogic doctrine of totalitarianism in the monotony of a Tibetan prayer wheel. Thus, today's dominant bourgeois research on fascism lags far behind the results of bourgeois-democratic and social-democratic analyses of fascism in the 1930s and 1940s.

To a certain extent, it is true that the bourgeois side has stated that Marxist-Leninist historiography in the past and present has been primarily concerned with German fascism. However, this has nothing to do with any kind of one-sidedness. This fact arises from scientific and political requirements.

Characteristics, i.e. general characteristics of similar or recurring historical phenomena and processes, can be derived most accurately from their particularly distinctive and, in this sense, typical manifestations. Compared to all historically preceding and subsequent fascist movements and forms of rule, fascism experienced its most comprehensive and perfected manifestation in Germany. This has its decisive cause in the advanced state of development of the imperialist system of rule. If there were no fascist dictatorships in other highly developed capitalist countries at the same time or afterwards, then this has various causes, among which the increased resistance of the democratic forces in the individual countries and on an international scale stands in the first place, a resistance that was stimulated by the confrontation with the fascist dictatorship in Germany, which threatened humanity.

[451] The primary focus of Marxist-Leninist fascism research on fascism in Germany, its manifestations, the causes of its victory and the lessons to be learned from it is explained not least by the political necessity of providing anti-fascist forces around the world with the necessary tools to avert similar dangers in good time.

Marxist-Leninist social scientists are fully aware that there is still much to improve in the historical and contemporary analysis and critique of fascism. The basic theoretical insights of the Marxist-Leninist analysis of fascism are not always processed in a sufficiently qualified manner in historiographical practice. Not all important aspects of the problem of fascism are pursued with sufficient attention or researched with the necessary intensity. Moreover, both the advancing process of knowledge and the broader historical process in which new fascist movements and regimes have emerged in capitalist countries raise new questions and pose new problems for research, for the solution of which it is not sufficient to build on what is already known, but which also require a further and new development of theoretical elements of the Marxist-Leninist conception of fascism. In order to grasp fascism in all its manifestations with the precision necessary for the struggle of the democratic forces, Marxist-Leninist research processes all findings and experiences that can be of use in shedding light on the historical truth. However, a determination of the nature of fascist movements and forms of rule that is adequate to social reality must always remain the be-all and end-all of the approach. In accordance with the classical Marxist-Leninist analysis and characterization of fascism in power by the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, the decisive characteristics of such a determination of essence are and remain that it emerges from concrete historical experience and its scientific generalization, or rather is based on it, and that it is based on the concrete historical experience and its scientific generalization. that they characterize the social nature and social function of fascism, that they grasp the historical place of fascism in the development of society as a whole and that they have a mobilizing character, i.e. that they activate and orient those forces which are able and willing to fight fascism effectively.